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IF JOBS ARE THE ANSWER IT MUST HAVE BEEN A STUPID QUESTION

How flexible can we get?

In January London will be hosting a G7 / EEC Summit meeting on Jobs, not that Londoners were asked about it. Blair will be trying to get the world dominators to take up his (well, the Tories') ideas of flexibility to create more jobs, of Welfare to Work, Students to Work, Mothers to Work, Children to Chimneys, ... as the solution to the world's problems. The French leadership will be calling for more old-fashioned job creation policies, and seem surprised at not getting support from their fellow 'socialists'. But whatever the twist, our leaders are sure that jobs are the answer.

Globally they want to ensure that nobody can survive without working for them in return, that everywhere the only choice is for us to hand over our skills and abilities, our bodies and our minds in exchange for just enough for us to get by and get back to work. Of course how little we'll accept depends on our history and our strength, but while its true that in this country many wages are quite a bit above poverty levels, not only are many below, but increasing numbers are expected to work for free, as 'work experience', to get a job. After over a decade of Blairite policies, millions have been forced into taking on increasing numbers of jobs to survive, into 'self-employment', temporary and contract work, and are we happier for it?

"I WAS LOOKING FOR A JOB AND I FOUND A JOB - AND HEAVEN KNOWS ITS FLECKABLE NOW" - THE SMITHS

The level of dissatisfaction with jobs is shown by the fact that the kind of imagery of slavery, boredom, misery previously used in critiques of work, are now used by Job Agencies and newspapers plugging their jobs section. Maybe I will be happy when I get the right job, satellite TV, the latest CD/video/drugs/style. The way to a better future is supposed to be through better competition, more flexibility, lying better at interviews, working even harder than our colleagues....

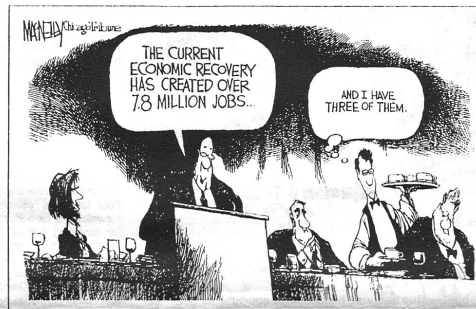
"THE ONLY THING WORSE THAN HAVING A JOB IS NOT HAVING ONE" - O WILDE

Of course, forcing everybody to be active on the labour market doesn't guarantee that everyone manages to get a job (or two, or however many necessary to survive). In fact the system requires constant pressure and competition from the bottom, from those who have little or nothing. This has meant fifteen years of attacks on the unwaged, making life worse by cuts in income and services, increases in bills and taxes, and increased pressure to compete or lose everything. While unemployment is productive in their terms, Blair & Co dream of getting rid of the need for it by forcing us to be doubly productive - by being poor enough to have to constantly compete for other jobs, while working. Everyone will be forced onto work schemes, 'training' by work etc. or forced off benefits (and statistics) for not proving they're 'actively seeking work' cos in the end the only way you can show you're doing enough to find a job is by finding one.

Very flexible -
now kiss
your job
goodbye!



Meanwhile those with jobs are under increasing pressure simply to keep them. The Liverpool Dockers, Hillingdon Hospital workers, Magnet workers..... are quite reasonably fighting for their jobs back, for an end to the attacks on pay and conditions that came out on strike against, for a bit of dignity. But after months and years of struggle, of organising for themselves, meeting workers and supporters from around the world, going back to how things were could only leave them with a bad taste in their mouths.



Grow your own job?

The Green critique of jobs shows up the destructive nature of Jobs, not only to humans but to our environment, the constant search for cash and profit outside the control of any human community, building weapons of destruction, factories of pollution, fields of chemicals. But many Green theorists end up with a localism and moralism that further mystify our powers and needs distorted through the alienated forms of economics. LETs (Local Economic Trading schemes) try to allow people to express their needs and abilities socially outside of the existing money market, but fail because they assume we can produce with what we individually have to hand - so the main people involved are the various types of therapists. If successful they merely keep people working on the margins until the state or market find better things to do with them.

On the other hand, simply trying to defend unemployment and benefits keeps us in a similar rut of poverty and waiting. Expecting the national state to intervene on our behalf in a global economy leaves us isolated and dependent. Anyway, despite anger at the USA, most doleys aren't fighting because its like fighting to defend crap jobs - too much work, not enough pay. The collective spaces and support developed when the dole wasn't such a shit place to be, now rest on a poverty, moralism, arrogance worse than the worst of the Greens. Without space and facilities unemployment becomes doing nothing, and most people don't want to do nothing. Work at least brings you in contact with other people, gets you out of the house and away from the boredom and misery of the dole.

"DIVING FOR DEAR LIFE - WHEN WE COULD BE DIVING FOR PEARLS" - ELVIS

To develop a real critique of Jobs and the world we are forced to produce and worship through them, we need to develop a new critique of the misery of life outside work, compared to the infinite potential of human society and individuals producing and playing according to our needs desires and abilities. We need a new vision of what it would mean to have the world at the disposal of our social and individual creativity and needs, instead of our creativity, needs and world being at the disposal of those with the money and power to put us to work for their greater power and wealth.

We need to take this opportunity to come together to start to develop this vision, as human beings with dreams, no matter how many jobs we are lumbered with, to create a focus for our dissatisfaction and needs. We are not alone.....

STOP THE JOBS SUMMIT

Open meeting to organise campaign against the Summit on Sat 20th Sept, 2-6 pm at Brownswood Rd Library, N4; for more info contact BM-CRL London WC1N 3XX.

DOCKERS INTERNATIONAL BRINGING IT HOME!

On September 8th, International Day of Action for the Liverpool Dockers, about 25 activists went to visit the head of Mersyde Docks Co, Gordon Waddle, at his Kensington home. Gordon wasn't in, but two lots of neighbours came out to play and made tea for the demonstrators. They were interested to find out what Gordon does for a living, as he was the only one at residents' association meetings who wouldn't say. The cops eventually turned up but failed to move the demo to the other side of the road, but they did kidnap the massive banner saying 'Injustice is Not Anonymous - it has a name and address' (for full address see Corporate Watch, Box E, 111 Magdalen Road, Oxford OX4 1RQ).

There was then a visit to the Regents St office of Drakes, the temp agency who recruits scabs for the docks. The office was occupied for about an hour and the manager pretended to be reasonable so some people argued it out - until they saw a notice on his wall. The notice pretended to be from the World Wildlife Fund and in patronising and offensive terms described the dockers as an endangered species, and plans to set up a captive breeding programme. It claimed that they had 'low intelligence' [sick]. This is how temp agencies, like other bosses, see workers, particularly those with the sense and guts to fight back. Found out, they called the cops and stopped pretending to be reasonable.

Word is that internationally the day was a big success, with full support in Australia and troops being used..... but we've been getting complaints about having too much international stuff in Contraflow.

See calendar for Liverpool march and other upcoming events..

Mitchell Principles? Not for the British Government

On the morning of 23rd of September 1996, Diarmuid O'Neill was assassinated by the Metropolitan Police. He was targeted in his room and then shot unarmed, and was dragged while dying down his front door steps and forced to wait for an ambulance. This didn't happen in Belfast but in Hammersmith, West London. While at the time of writing the armed struggle in north eastern Ireland has been put on hold, the British press and government bleat on about the Mitchell principles of non-violence ... what's a shoot to kill policy by the British state got to do with non violence? With the unionist population of the 6 County statelet armed to the teeth land excluded from the Dunblane anti guns legislation! peace without justice for O'Neill, Irish POWs and the working class communities of north eastern Ireland is impossible.

for info - contact BM Box D O'Neill London WC1N 3XX

INSIDE:



Calendar and reviews;
reports from Contraflow's
roving correspondents in
Amsterdam, Berlin and Madrid
(minus holiday snaps);
all the news from Stokeley
Stockwell we could print;
and more (see for yourself)

As our detractor says "Not
worth the price on the front!"

News - one reason why *Contraflow* is late again is that we want to fill it with news that is useful in the struggle against Capital, Patriarchy, Racism and the State ... news that comes from the participants in these struggles showing the problems and potential solutions that we face. It's all too easy to say that the new government changes nothing - the effects of New Labour's policies may be the same but the rhetoric and co-option methods change. Some of this can come from the collective - but some has to come from our readers - that's you! ... drop us a line or come to one of the 'Flow workshops [see the calendar].

Distribution - bulk copies of **Contraflow** are available from the 56a [Crampton St SE17 Thurs + Fri 3-7], and 121 [Railton Rd SE24 Mons, Tues, + Thurs 7 -11] infoshops and the Brownwood Road Squat Centre [N4, Suns 7 - 11]. Please come and help distribute **Contraflow** to your local pub, community centre, dole queue or workplace. Drop us a line to say what you're doing.



"Do or Die" no.6
Voices from Earth First!

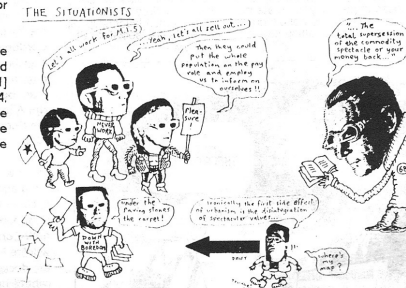
The features on road protest camps at Fairmile and Newbury have some thoughtful critiques of problems arising, such as lack of local involvement or informal hierarchies. As someone who went to Claremont Rd twice and cheered the rest on the telly I can't comment from experience but it's a nice change to see groups try to look at their strengths and weaknesses instead of going in for self-congratulatory backslapping. All in all a good read and well worth it. (or its £1.50 +70p post -\$5- worldwide from South Downs EPI, c/o Priory House, 6 Tilbury Place, Brighton, E Sussex)

Work is shit, useless, dangerous, and its getting worse, intensifying in time, space and effort demanded. This is the message of *Ballad Against Work*, and apart from occasional sections on resistance that come across as incredibly isolated, it's quite scary reading. What is interesting is that coming from India it shows how many things are the same there, and everywhere – that the problems and solutions are global. It seems the people who did this are also doing loads of grass roots stuff, producing a local workers' news sheet in massive quantities, and this is an attempt to start to develop a more global resistance. And its free! – if you can find a copy. If you send us (Contralflow) a 39p stamp we should be able to get you a copy.

Collectivities: Majdoor Labour, Autopain Jhugai, N.I.T., Faridabad 121001, India.

The Contraflow meeting on race and struggle was well attended despite stiff competition from the 'Between the Lines' football tournament (splitters!). We started out by arguing over a definition of racism. Some people said that behaviour was only racist if the perpetrators had a privileged position in society. In other words Bengalis attacking Somalis in Shadwell is not racism. Other people felt this was a liberal white guilt argument and attacking someone on the basis of their race is racism, pure and simple. The debate moved on to the historical roots of racism, looking at the importance of divide and rule throughout the ages to the ruling class, and the position the English working class gained through colonialism. Everyone roughly agreed on these points for once.

And finally, the *Between the Lines* football tournament was won by... *Between the Lines*. FIFA will be investigating.



Well, best-value activist handbook to appear this year is undoubtedly *Road Rage: top tips for wrecking roadbuilding*. For just 3 pounds, you get a deliciously thick, thorough guide to all aspects of anti-roads direct action. It's all been written by experienced activists from around Britain and includes tactics and ideas learnt over the years since Twyford Down. There are lots of beautifully-drawn diagrams and illustrations (eg how to make a scaffold tripod); lots of useful contacts and examples of previous campaign leaflets. Completely vital for anyone starting off a new camp-based campaign on any issue - the chapters on sustaining yourselves (avoiding burn-out) and the legalities of protesting should be a worthwhile read for anyone. Plus a long list of contacts and resources. It's only £3! You can get it from: Road Alert! PO Box 5544, Newbury, Berks RG14 5FB.



Corporate Watch have also produced the 'Corporate Watcher's address book', a directory listing the principal, and directors' home, addresses of 'over 50 ethically challenged UK corporations'. You'll never be stuck for a false name to use again... Costs £3.50 unwaged/ £2 unwaged (nice one). 'Corporate Watch', the magazine, comes out every three months or so. Subscribe for 6 issues - £9/£6. And if that's not all, CW is primarily an info service - and you are particularly knowledgeable about a corporation/ industry and have information to share give them a call! 01865 791 391. Box E, 111 Magdalen Road, Oxford OX4 1RQ.

The Justice for Keith Mann (animal liberation prisoner sentenced to 11 years) campaign is asking for supporters to write letters, to Jack Straw & various other prison bodies, asking that Keith is given Cat C status and therefore a chance of parole in about 6 months. Send an SAE (& donation?) to the campaign for details of what to write/ what else you could do to help:

JFKMC c/o ICA, PO Box 1135, Downs View Road, Hassocks, West Sussex BN6 8AA.

Write to Keith (remember all letters are read by the screws):
Keith Mann EC3588, HMP Long Lartin, South Littleton, Evesham, Worcs WR11 5TZ.

Satpal Ram is serving life imprisonment for defending himself against a racist attack. He is often moved between prisons so contact the Free Satpal campaign for details: 0121 331 1511.

On the 26th of August the show-trial against Green Anarchist and the ALF (Gandalf) started at Portsmouth Crown Court. Four of GA's editors and the ALF Supporter's Group Newsletter's editor could be imprisoned for 10 years just for reporting animal lib news or knowing that others did. Whatever you think of Green Anarchist's politics, this trial may set a precedent for State repression of other subversive groups via the conspiracy/incitement laws. According to the Gandalf Defendants' Campaign this is the first case of this type where public interest immunity certificates have been used to suppress evidence due to MIS's involvement...

'Gathering Force'

Another book just out is 'Gathering Force' - described as a guide to 'DIY culture for those tired of waiting'. Well there are a lot of good photos and it's well laid-out, with broad sections eg. 'Land & Housing', 'Raves & festivals'.... The first chapter contains some historical comparisons - in case anyone hadn't realised that protesting didn't start in the last couple of years.

The rest of the book includes interviews with individuals active in all sorts of campaigns but there's a disconcerting failure to highlight some creative projects which certainly deserve inclusion. It's obvious the writers have little personal involvement in their subject-matter: they've also gone to such well-known exponents of 'DIY culture' as Chris Smith MP, Geoff Mulgan (besotted lefty think-tank media baron), Andrew Marr (editor of the independent newspaper), Chris Rose (salaried Greenpeace campaigner)..... Which sort of loses the point. Much as the term 'DIY' means many different things to different people, my personal definition is nowhere near that of one of the books interviewees: "We can save ourselves an awful lot of headaches if we can get our concerns onto the Government's agenda...we have a system, we have an establishment, and we can utilise them".

Anyway it comes with a £9.99 price tag from the Big issue, and would look lovely on your coffee-table. Well worth shop-lifting. Another new book at the you-must-be-kidding unaffordable end of the market is the 'Video Activist Handbook' being sold by Undercurrents/ Pluto Press. It costs £11.99 and sadly we didn't have enough funds to review it for you lovely readers.

If you come across a great book and think we should tell people about it, please write in! Who knows, you might end up on the collective...

Brixton news...

Brixton City Challenge's planned 'Brixton Festival' was unfortunately cancelled due to the tragedy engulfing the nation at the time. Like their flagging plans to turn Brixton's lively centre into a sanitised shopping mall where high street chains could trade happily under the multiple eyes of CCTV. Roll on '98...

And just up the road, the council's trying hard to prove its green credentials by 'restoring' Rush Common to the people of Brixton. Well, common land for the people is a great idea, but no thanks, we don't really want it right next to the polluted A23. A few years ago, they spent 80 grand demolishing the Brixton fashion building (which had provided useful resources, eg screen-printing and studio space) and turning the flatteringly flat site into an (equally flat) piece of grass. The public's use of it seems limited to using it as an (unplanned, now muddy) shortcut to Saltoun Road: people don't even walk their dogs there!

Well now the plan is to create a Town Square for Brixton. A new cycle-route; some new benches, and eventually some new trees - also, surprise surprise, some new CCTV cameras.

Jeffreys Road in Stockwell was recently the scene of public protest as Pinewood Motors (who have a showroom next door) started demolishing a Victorian church building and its accompanying trees. Local residents complained that there had been no consultation at all before the (unlisted) building was torn down. All this to create a bigger fore-court/ parking lot for the garage.... Evening vigils took place at the site, and met with violence from the contractors and the private security guards brought in to 'secure' the site. There seems to be no legal way to challenge the demolition - Pinewood only need planning permission to change its use before making it a parking lot - and very little sympathy from Lambeth Council, who were contacted early on in the protesters' fight to halt work.

Also, on Jeffreys Road, lies one of the public libraries closed by Lambeth in one of its latest series of cuts. Abandoned for months, the building was squatted six months ago and has since provided ingeniously-constructed accommodation for (probably) hundreds of travelling punks, queers & other undesirables... court dates been & gone... watch this space...

Fed up with low wages and bad conditions?
Poor Health and Safety standards?
Get in touch
We aim to provide advice and assistance in organising in your workplace and fighting back against the boss.
We are independent of trade unions and political parties and we are committed to providing practical help.
Phone/fax us on 0181 374 5027
On 1st Wednesday of the month between 6-9pm or leave a message at any other time and we will get back to you
Please state that the message is for the Solidarity Federation
North London Solidarity Federation-
For organisation against bosses and bureaucrats
PO Box 1681 London N6 7LE

Botched job!

Good old Lambeth council with its usual 'awe-inspiring level of competence' made a balls-up of it again! But this allowed the 121 centre to 'cock a snook' right in the face of local government.

Wishing to evict 121 (despite having been squatted for 16 years), Lambeth took the collective to court on July 24th. Approx 9 members of the centre appeared on the morning armed to the hilt with day-books from recent years, an impressive file of 'Crowbar' (once published at 121) and with statements from ex-collective members citing what their involvement was and for how long a period. All essential as proof of 121's continuous occupation. But you can imagine the surprise, even amusement, felt by everyone, when after 5 mins the judge stops a member of 121 during mid-sentence of giving evidence from the witness box (as I remember her sentence can't have totalled any more than 4 words!) and asks the court's barrister to explain 'precisely what is the case that you're bringing against them?'

The barrister, thrown into complete confusion and disarray, paused for quite some seconds before asking the judge what he meant by such a comment.

Lambeth 'bless 'em' failed to say in their statement of claim that the building had originally been entered 'illegally'. The absence of the word 'illegal' was reason enough for the judge to throw the case out albeit temporarily and send them (the council) packing with a flea in their ear for wasting this time! Needless to say Lambeth have now amended their statement of claim with the word 'illegally', with much additional but generally fictitious information besides. Despite this development, the fact remains it's been approx 6-7 weeks (at the time of going to print) since the last court hearing and as yet there has been no fresh date set for another hearing. Given as I understand, local government, and Lambeth especially, frequently judges eviction related paper-work it might be prudent for any other squatters to check any correspondence of this nature with a fine-tooth comb (since judges are not generally so forthright in pointing mistakes out). This could mean getting a 2-3 month extension or longer and further time to prepare your defence if necessary. You also get the pleasure of seeing local government being rapped sharply over the knuckles by the judiciary - ha ha - it's so nice when these bed-fellows fall out!

So in 121's instance I think it's only appropriate to say "Well done Lambeth" and "Whatever would we do without yer!" The info-shop etc at 121 Rallton Road, Brixton is open every Monday, Tuesday, Thursday from 7-11pm.

The old library in West Norwood was shut down.../ Lambeth in October '94, after 20 years of use as a community centre. A local group occupied it for 6 months in protest but despite their efforts to keep the place open as a space for all kinds of activities (media/ resource centre with quiet study space and a drop-in day centre for the elderly) and strong community support, they were evicted in January this year. They were offered an insecure monthly licence for their summer project, but the council have since employed consultants to consider various 'bids' for its future (theme' pub, art gallery etc.) They were forced to run the kids' summer activity programme outdoors, meeting each day on the pavement outside while the building remains empty. In a new twist there are rumours that the Council is now going to turn the building into a library once more, to house all the books moved out of the new West Norwood Library when it was closed down last year.... The West Norwood Community Development group are trying to negotiate some way of sharing the space and at the moment are seeking help with fund-raising, admin, and putting together the sort of business plan needed. If you'd like to help - especially with the above skills, please contact them: 0171 501 5647.

The Jan Rebane Centre occupation continues (It was a well-used trade union and unemployed resource centre till Lambeth cut the funding in '95). The Afro-Caribbean Saturday School is starting a new term, with limited spaces left for 5-16 year olds to learn maths, English, science and black history. Teachers and volunteer helpers also welcome. Tel: 0171 978 8171. Also at the centre, the popular Veganomni cafe has reopened for the winter. Food, cake, live poetry & storytelling (and probably some more films) from 7pm every Wednesday night - 12-14 Thornton Street, off Brixton Road (by the Old White Horse) SW9.

Thursday afternoons... if you hang around Brixton High Street long enough and look upwards, you'll eventually see a nuclear train going past. Every week, trains carrying nuclear waste from eg Dounreay, go through inner-city London on their way north for 'reprocessing'. This is the sort of transport that makes thousands of Germans leave their homes and block miles and miles of route in protest. What do we do here? Carry on shopping (skipping/ squatting/ surviving) without thinking about the deadly business that is nuclear power. If you live locally and wanna get active about this, get in touch with us c/o 0171 978 8214. We're planning a meeting sometime very soon...



Not quite Brixton News

Fareshares is a community-run, non-profit wholefoods co-op, open Thursday 2-8pm & Friday 3-7pm at 56 Crampton Street, near Elephant & Castle, SE17. The building also hosts the 56a info-shop & archives; the bike library and a well-equipped bike-recycling workshop. They're looking for more volunteers at the moment - so if you're interested in any of the above projects drop in for a chat about getting involved. There are also plans for a local Food Not Bombs group to operate at Elephant.

Tenants in Hackney have produced an 8-page newspaper about estate privatisation - you can get a copy for free by sending an SAE to: TAP c/o 56 Clarence Road E5.

Advisory Service for Squatters new opening times!!!! Sunday to Thursday 2pm to 6pm (instead of Mon-Fri)

Brownwood Road Library (N4) is now open again with vegan cafes every Sunday night from 8, as long as you remember to put your name down to cook in future

Contraflow Clarification:

In the last 'flow there was a short piece about the split in Class War and the activities of the Anti Election Alliance. This referred to the minority faction of CW nationally as a rump and a minority of the London group.

We have been approached by the minority faction of CW who wished to make the following points:

- * This faction of CW consisted of most of the London group along with a number of groups around the country - in total some 40% of the final CW conference in March.
- * This faction of CW argues that it was excluded from a number of caucuses held before this conference. This included women members of the London CW group being excluded from a mixed discussion on Women and CW.
- * This faction of CW also argues that the Anti Election alliance was a success, through the distribution of 200,000 stickers, a 100 strong contingent on the London May Day March and a number of direct actions.

This faction of CW will continue to operate and can be contacted at PO Box 467 London E8 3QX - which is also the address for their latest paper which has come out. Their statement is available from this PO Box or from Contraflow on our website [technology willing!] or by sending an SAE to us.

[The above agreed statement is not an endorsement of the sexist nature of CW material which has appeared 3 times in the last few months.]

1,000,000 council flats to be sold.

One of the many things that didn't change with the election is the plan to privatise 1,000,000 council homes in what are called Large Scale Voluntary Transfers (LSVTs) to Housing Associations or Local Housing Companies. £5 billion has been kept unspent from council house sales from the last 18 years and now the new government will allow some £800 million to be spent from this over the next 2 years. However, Labour does not oppose these transfers and in fact, Hackney has already said that it will be spending it's share on subsidising these privatisations - not on council homes.

For tenants, these LSVTs mean getting the repairs that they have been waiting for 20 or more years for. But the price to pay is very heavy. Big rent rises are planned - up to and over 50% - with more to come after the 5 year rent guarantee period. Service charges will be levied - which won't be covered by housing benefit. Secure Tenancies will be lost - allowing evictions for rent arrears - poverty - far more easily.

In other words, millions of working class tenants, waged and unwaged, will be forced to pay for the repairs - that many of them have already paid for in their rents for decades. Existing Housing Association tenants are paying higher rents to provide the surplus to fund these schemes and having their homes re-mortgaged to provide security for the loans. At the same time, Housing Association bureaucrats are paying themselves private sector wages, and cutting cleaning and maintenance staff wages to the same 'competitive', private sector rates.

These transfers are "voluntary" only in name. Small armies of housing association bureaucrats are used to sell the scheme to tenants. So called 'independent' Tenant's Friends have refused to work with tenants who oppose the schemes. Councils say that repairs will have to wait up to 20 years unless tenants allow the privatisations to occur. Stranger still, some leading housing organisations who opposed 'Tory' LSVTs are silent about 'Labour' LSVTs.

In Hackney, where 7,000 flats could be privatised by next year, tenants have been organising alongside Council workers against these plans. We can offer support to tenants elsewhere who need information or someone to compare experiences with. But we need information about how these LSVTs are being carried out elsewhere in the country. We also need information on Housing Associations rent rises, evictions, expulsion of tenants' representatives etc. Our attempts to get such information through 'official' channels are being hampered at every turn.

Tenants Against Privatisation can be contacted at 56 Clarence Rd London E5.

In solidarity,
Some Hackney Tenants

You may have noticed we have been shamelessly lifting cartoons by Heinrich Hinz (If you want his book "The fish John West reject" try contacting Scratch! Media, PO Box 597, Dickson ACT 2602, Australia)

The London Forum

The second London Forum meeting was attended by about 35 people including a healthy sized contingent from Kent. It was a positive and forward looking discussion which was remarkably free from bitching and backbiting. The most commonly raised point was the need for revolutionaries to get involved in activities which actually improve people's lives. People suggested working in local groups, and the Gravesend group who produce the excellent 'Gravedigger' magazine and the exemplary Haringey Solidarity Group talked about their activities. The problems of divisions within communities, and how to overcome isolation were mentioned, and obviously these are vitally important areas for us to look at. The need for different groups to meet up regularly and talk to each other to co-ordinate activities was also brought up.

People talked about the alienating nature of political activities as they are and how politics needs to be linked to real life and make you feel better not worse. My excellently shoplifted new coat was also admired at length in the pub and much beer was drunk in mourning of the demise of Di and Dodi. The next meeting will be held in about a month.

[London Forum has been formed by the members in London of the majority faction of Class War nationally - see the clarification about the CW split above.]

for info: HSG - Box 2474 Ldn N8,
the Gravedigger - Box 1 Gravesend, Kent
DA11 7NE,
London Forum - BM Box 5538 Ldn
WC1N 3XX

contraFLOW calendar

SEPTEMBER

thu 25: LONDON

PAIN. Head on a stick, Dementia, Judge Tier & the Duvalles play a benefit gig for ARCH/ refugees.. 8.30pm-1am at the Pembury Tavern, Amhurst Road E8. £3/2 entry.

25 - 28: SHEFFIELD

Groundswell Forum - bringing together homeless people and DIY solutions. (NB. This is not the anti-JSA Groundswell!) Tel: 0171 833 2071.

26 - 28: LEEDS

Women Speak Out - weekend of events to mark the 40th anniversary of the Windscale fire. Info: Box Z, 16 Sholebrook Avenue, Leeds LS7 3HB.

fri 26: LONDON

Grand gala cabaret night in aid of the Liverpool dockers - they'll never sing alone! Starts 8pm at Wood Green Labour Club, 3 Stuart Crescent N22 (Wood Green tube). £5/2.50 entry. Tel: 0181 442 0090.

sat 27: LONDON

Fuming Mad rally - in support of the Road Traffic Reduction Bill. 2pm at Trafalgar Square. Tel: 0171 490 1555.

LIVERPOOL

National solidarity march with the sacked dockers (2nd anniversary). Assemble 12.30pm at Myrtle Parade. For details of 7am coaches from London (£12.50/5) call 0181 442 0090.

NATIONAL

Possible Day of action vs BP's activities in Columbia? Confirm: 0171 357 0344.

NEAR OXFORD

Shut down Campsfield detention centre! Monthly picket starts at 12 noon outside the main gate. Tel: 01865 558 145.

27 - 28: near HELENSBURGH

Secret Peace Artists' Ball: a celebration of Faslane Peace Camp, with art, music, theatre, kids' stuff, poetry & more. Tel: 01436 820 901.

EVICT TRIDENT NOT THE PEACE CAMP!

After 15 years highlighting the dangers of nuclear weapons in Scotland, Faslane Peace Camp is under threat of eviction by the new Argyll & Bute council. Thanks to so many summer visitors the camp now boasts tree-houses, lock-ons and other fortifications. The council claims to be reviewing its situation (and cannot afford a long Fairmile-style eviction) so perhaps the camp will flourish for another 15 years. Support of all kinds badly needed; phone to find out what you can do to help: 01436 820 901.

27 - 29: BRISTOL

Direct action training & mass trespass vs the extension of Durnford Quarry into Ashton Court park. Tel: 0117 942 0129.

sun 28: LEEDS

Eco-weekenders' alliance - gathering for those trying to juggle jobs and activism. At Cornerstone. Tel: Sarah 0113 262 9365.

BRIGHTON

Lobby the Labour Party Conf. - end BP's links with Columbian death-squads! 0171 357 0344.

OXFORDSHIRE

National demo vs Hillgrove farm - cat-breeders for vivisection - Dry Lane, Witney/ Minster Lovell.

LONDON

Cannabis Turn Yourself In Day. Meet 2.23pm at Speakers Corner, Hyde Park.

NATIONAL

Ramblers 'Access Day' - phone the Ramblers Assoc. for details of local events: 0171 582 6878.

mon 29: LONDON

Liverpool dockers' mystery tour: Reclaim the Streets dancing into action with the dockers... Meet 10am at Victoria Station - bring drums, instruments and at least £12.50 for fares. Info: 0171 281 4621.

BRITAIN'S 1st ANTI- VIVISECTION CAMP!

Animal rights activists have set up a camp at Huntingdon Life Sciences. It's on Woolley Road, on the east side of the A1 just north of the A1/ A14 junction in Cambridgeshire. Tel: 01582 505 984/ 0860 245 406/ 01832 293 468.

LYMINGE AWAITING EVICTION.....

Camps set up to oppose Rank's leisure development plans in Kent are now waiting for the bailiffs. Tel: 01303 265 737 or 0410 536 592.

tue 30: LONDON

Roisin McAliskey's long-awaited committal hearing. Picket in support from 2pm onwards, outside Bow Street magistrates' court. Tel: Fuiscaill 0181 955 8250/ 0956 919 871.

ISRAEL

11th anniversary of Mordechai Vananu's incarceration. For more details: 0171 607 2302.

OCTOBER

(end corporate dominance month)

(Also the 80th anniversary of the Russian Revolution when the factory committees really fucked up corporate dominance!)

wed 1: FARNBOROUGH

Shut down COPEX arms fair. 0171 281 0297.

WEST LONDON

Hillingdon hospital strikers (2 years on) Day of Action. Starts at 7am with a mass picket outside the hospital. Assemble 11am onwards at Colham Green, Colham Road, for a march to a rally at Uxbridge Civic centre - bring your banners. Tel: 0956 135 311.

LONDON

Women's direct action group meets 8pm at the Jan Rebane Centre, Brixton SW9. All women welcome. Tel: 0171 978 8214.

2 - 5: LONDON

Anti Fascist Action rally & conference. Info: send an SAE to AFA, BM 1734, London WC1N 3XX.

2 - 16: GLOBAL

Fortnight of action vs genetically-engineered foods; life patents & factory farming... Contact: GEN 0181 374 9516/ WEN 0171 247 3327.

fri 3: ESSEX

Vigil at Cheales Abattoir, Brentwood. Tel: HOOF 01206 564 904.

3 - 5: SHEFFIELD

Urban Permaculture design course - practical sustainability in the inner-city. Tel: 0114 279 7164

4 - 5: UP NORTH

Northern EFL networking gathering... Tel: 0161 224 4846.

sat 4: BATH

Reclaim the Streets party - meet 12 noon at the Circus. Tel: 01249 713 742.

DERBY

Reclaim the Streets party - meet 12 noon at Market Place.

LONDON

Jesus-la exhibition closing party 6pm-12. At 121 Raiton Road, Brixton SE24.

sun 5: LONDON

Another Contraflow discussion workshop - local community organising - at 121 Raiton Road, Brixton SE24. Refreshments provided - starts 3pm.

mon 6: SPACE

NASA due to launch Cassini probe with 73 lbs of plutonium on board. Tel: 01274 730 795 Where are the plutonium of Autonomous Astronauts when we need 'em?

wed 8: GLOBAL

Action vs Peabody Coal. The largest single source of greenhouse gases in N America and also responsible for trashing indigenous rights in Arizona.

8 -14: GLOBAL

Boycott of Procter Gamble & week of action. 14th: company's AGM in Ohio/ Uncaged! petition-delivering to Newcastle HQ. 0114 253 0020.

thu 9: LONDON

Benefit night for ASS/ARCH - line-up: lowaska, Head Jam, Dead Dog Mountain, Electric Groove Temple & (tbc) a surprise band from Uganda! 9pm-late at the Point, Stoke Newington Road. £3.50/2.50.

10 - 12: ALDERMASTON

Regular women's peace camp. Tel: 0117 939 3746

11 - 12: LONDON

Strike Oil! Weekend of action against the oil industry. RTS: 0171 281 4621...part of...

- 100 days of action vs oil exploration - call Corporate Watch 01865 791 391 for details.

11 - 12: LONDON

On Saturday, Arms Trade campaign day, 10.30-5.30pm. On Sunday, Factory Action Network day, 11-4.30pm. At the Battlebridge Centre, Kings Cross NW1. Tel: CAAT 0171 281 0297.

ANTI-QUARRY CAMP IN DEVON

The camp's on the site of a proposed ball clay quarry extension, at Teingrace near Newton Abbott. Mobile: 0467 622 825.

If you're 16 or over, and don't understand why trying to get away with buying a ticket is wrong, don't worry.

There's always one.

Fare Dodgers Liberation Front, Box FDI.F, 121 Raiton Road, London

11 - 18: GLOBAL

Week of action against McDonalds, including 11th: Kids vs Big Mac; 12th: solidarity with workers; & 16th: World Food Day/traditional day of action vs McDonalds. Contact: 0171 713 1269.

sun 12: HERTS

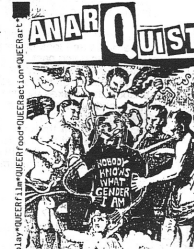
Animal rights demo, starts 12 noon at Bury Green farm (Glaxo-Wellcome cod-breeding unit), Much Hadham, off A120. Stevenage AR: 01430 220 480.

mon 13: USA

Unplug America Day - "turn out the lights, shut off the taps, cut off your engines and celebrate your freedom from consumption..." Worth copying?

tue 14: LONDON

Benefit for the Liverpool Dockers at the Forum, Kentish Town NW5.



sat 18: LONDON

AnarQuist - monthly anarcho-queer night at 121 Raiton Road, Brixton SE24. Food, films, poetry, queercore bands Mouthfull & Sapphic Sluts, dancing till dawn... starts 7pm. Contact: 0171 978 8214.

LONDON

Annual anarchist bookfair at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1 (Holborn).

WINCHESTER

Veggie giveaway at the McDonalds litter collection point. Tel: 01962 773 673.

GLOBAL

Day of Action vs Nike. Contact Campaign for Labor Rights by email: alliance@mlr.net. Also, Shell's 100th birthday!

18 - 19: near HELENSBURGH

'Shut it!' NVDA, party & protest against Trident's Scottish home. Bring tent, warm clothes, music, humour (& "no pictures of Princess Di") Tel: Faslane Peace Camp 01436 820 901.

18 - 20: CORNWALL

The Land is Ours campaign convergence at Keveral farm. Tel: 01865 722 016.

23 - 26: SOMERSET

Free 4-day yurt-making course at Tinkers Bubble. £4 a day for meals. Tel: 01865 722 016.

wed 29: LONDON

Torchlit march for Women's Right to Choose. Assemble 6pm at ULU, Mallet Street WC1. Rally at Conway Hall 7.30pm. Info: Anita NUS 0171 561 5503.

LEDBURY

Demo at Quintilles vivisection lab: 11.15am-2pm. Tel: 01384 456 682.

30 - 2: YORKSHIRE

Menwith Hill women's peace camp invites women to a samurai gathering. 01943 468 593.

thu 30: LONDON

Reclaim The Streets/ARCH benefit - RTS house-band, Inner Terrestrials, King Prawn etc at the Pembury Tavern, from 8.30pm-1.30am. £3/2.

fri 31: SOMEWHERE

National hallowe'en treat for open-casters! Direct action against strip-mining. Tel: 0171 603 1831.

31 - 2: SHEFFIELD

Raise yer banners! a festival of political song. Write for info: PO Box 44, Sheffield S4 7RN. Tel: 0114 249 5185.

Send in your events & actions for the next issue - if we don't get it we can't print it.....

Contraflow's list of contacts and interesting publications [well they were interesting in January when the list was last done] can be got by sending us an SAE

We don't have space to list everything happening in November/ December. But if you want to keep up to date, see an SAE to:

Freedom Network, PO Box 9384, Brixton, London SW9 7ZB.
Or try the FN ACTION LINE: 0171 793 7343.

mmm! I must go along to this

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Striking a Chord - a series of benefits
No Issue is Single

Thursday 25th September at the Pembury Tavern, Amhurst Rd E8
for Hackney Refugees and Migrant Support Group and Autonomous Refugee Centre Hackney (ARCH) with Judge Trev, Head on a Stick, Dementia, the Duva and P.A.I.N.
8.30pm till 1am £3/2

Thursday 9th October at the Point, Stoke Newington Hill Street N16
for Advisory service for Squatters (ASS) and ARCH with Jowatt, Head Jam, Dead Dog Mountain, Electric Groove Temple (tbc) and surprise band from Uganda 9pm till very late £3.50/2.50

Thursday 30th October at the Pembury Tavern for Reclaim the Streets and ARCH with RTS House Band, Inner Terrestrials and King Pra 8.30pm till 1am £3/2

Friday 7th November at the Library, Brownwood Row an evening of cultural delight with artists from different refugee communities 8pm £3/2

Wednesday 26th November at the Garage, Highbury Corner N5
Victory celebration and benefit for McLibel with Radical Dance Faction, Tolu Love Frogs and Giltz Fish
8pm till 12pm £5/4

oh - look this one has been organised for us! thankyou!
Thursday 27th November at the Pembury Tavern an acoustic evening for ContraFlow and ARCH with 1926 Committee, the Dole Claimers, Sergio Nave (Mexican singer/songwriter) Nisan (Turkish band) and Deniz (Turkish singer)
8pm till 1am £3/2

... so now there's no excuses not to come north of the ri

NEW CAMP NEAR BRIGHTON!

It's been set up near Offham, just north Lewes to stop valuable marshland SSS being destroyed. More people needed - details & directions, tel: 01273 685 91

We aim to get a pilot issue together by the end of Octo. Send us a large SAE (sd a donation or stamps!) and we send you a copy. It'll be irregular and not too long - u not promising anything too ambitious and it all depends your input...
Primarily we want the news-sheet to be for and about women involved in direct action of all kinds.
Could you... contribute news? write about your experi take photos? draw cartoons or other graphics? help with cheap/free printing & photocopying? help organise a bi be a distribution/ contact point? help us think up a goo name for it??

If so, get i



WOMEN'S DIRECT ACTION NEW
c/o PO Box 9384, Brixton, London SW9

WE'RE ALL STAYING

Project Not Working

In Brighton, Project Work, the latest name for trying to screw dole claimants is collapsing. A series of demos outside 'voluntary' organisations taking on doleys forced to work there, and occupations of scheme managers offices has meant hardly anyone is willing to take part. The only people doing it seem to be those who organised their own placements doing useful work for an extra tenner, which unfortunately means they have to be encouraged to drop out to completely close down the scheme.

The cops have taken a lot of interest, taking peoples names on any protest and showing off their knowledge of who is who. But in their enthusiasm, they've also been removing everyone, not just demonstrators, from occupied buildings - closing the schemes down for a day. Info from Groundswell - 01865 723 750 [Oxford Claimants]

New Labour v. German workers

Having beaten German state attempts to destroy mining communities there like Heselstine did here, German miners are now under attack from a strange alliance of New Labour and a private open-cast mining company, Celtic Energy, with the backing of energy minister John Battle have successfully complained to the European Commission about the subsidies that the miners managed to defend through their massive strike and protest action.

Don't forget the day of actions against Open Cast on Halloween. - info 0171-603 1831

JOB FOR THE BOY

Glande Jackson's son, Daniel Hodges, who helped her get re-elected to parliament and so become a Minister for Transport, has now got a job at the Road Haulage Association as press manager. The RHA, led by former minister for tarmacng the country Stephen Norris is one of the main pro-road lobby organisations. New Deal for some, [We'd like to hear of any other new labour flunkys with their snouts in the trough]



Edinburgh anti Workfare

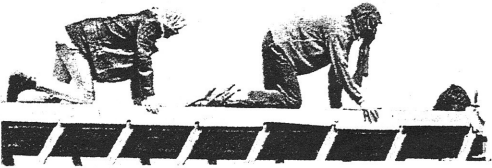
As usual Edinburgh actually managed to organise an event for the Groundswell UK-wide day of action against workfare on July 21st. Edinburgh Claimants and the local Dockers Support Group organised a rally against workfare, benefit cuts and casualisation, followed by an invasion of a Job Centre. After much noise, speeches, leafleting and putting up posters, with the manager panicking and trying to persuade other claimants that nice Mr Blair wouldn't do anything nasty to them, the cops cleared people out and the demo continued on the street.

The Autonomous Centre of Edinburgh has had a series of events and trips out to Faslane and other sites of resistance, as well as having an infoshop, claimants group and weekly open meetings. ACE, 17 West Montgomery Place, Edinburgh EH7 5HA, Scotland.

Images of urban class struggle in Berlin usually summon up the autonome squatting campaigns of the early 1980s and 1989-91 periods, struggles of turkish and kurdisch migrants and further back the anti fascist resistance in proletarian suburbs like 'Red' Wedding. Now the State is targeting the few remaining unlicensed squats [5 left as of late July 1997] and carrying out a restructuring -privatisation, gentrification and evictions - to make the inner suburbs a fit environment to the German government, which is preparing to move to Berlin from Bonn.

Drawing similarities between Berlin and London is difficult - London hasn't seen the 'return' of property to former owners for example as has occurred in East Berlin. Despite that, in both cities, 'artists' are often [unwittingly or not] at the cutting edge of gentrification - for example in Shoreditch, the new 'in' part of Hackney some 4,500 Council flats face privatisation - just as in Prenzlauerberg in Berlin. Both cities have huge working class communities to be managed in the interests of european capital - via New Labour in Britain and the Kohl package of cuts in Germany and the Tory (CDU) - Labour (SPD) coalition in the Berlin Senate. The challenge is how to build resistance in these contexts - where the state wants us to attack one another and creates the social pressure-cooker conditions to bring this about, where the blame falls on the unemployed and migrants rather than the ruling class.

The following is a part translation from a leaflet put out by Prenzlauerberg "Wir Bleiben Alle" [We're all staying!]. [Contraflow readers should remember that the area of building in Berlin is generally much larger than here - so that each house number mentioned is as big as a 5 storey Council block.]



"Wir Bleiben Alle"

Prenzlauerberg is "in" - just about every Berlin tour guide has to include a detour to this legendary area. It's hard to find the lifestyle magazine that doesn't rant on about the "funkiest part of town". Every month sees new restaurants, bars and other amusements for and of the Berlin central and culinary ruling class / Luvvy scene. The future capital and wanna be service metropolis of Berlin is trying to polish up its boring image, in competition with New York, London and Paris.

Inner city suburbs like Mitte and Prenzlauerberg are being used to reproduce the 'labour power' of high income workers with "culture and construction" through the offerings of the wild "Bronx". So posh shops and restaurants move in, older rented apartment buildings are renovated to luxury standard and then sold on at greater profit as private flats.

For the people who live here, a mixture of pensioners, workers, unemployed workers, students, and freaks; everyday life is becoming impossible - we are strangers in our own area. Since 1991, almost half of the 146,000 strong population of Prenzlberg has moved either in or out. In the main, the new residents have more money and their 'needs' and wants stamp themselves on the face of our area. Where there were post offices, food shops and bakeries - are now the stomping ground for cocktail bars and the rest. One sad example of this is the kids library in Woerther Strasse - which couldn't afford the new rent of 40 marks [per sq metre per month] and had to leave.

The people who actually live here in Prenzlauerberg - as we have done for 30 or more years, or moved here because we couldn't afford anywhere else - now face only insecurity from this. But we want to continue living here under our current conditions or better. We've had a gutful of politicians who tell us, despite the ever bigger profits for the huge companies, that we have to tighten our belts further for "Standort Deutschland" and that as well it's all the fault of migrants. We don't need the Tiergarten tunnel, the Kohl railway station and the other palaces - what we need is the tool to resist - to make our interests and needs in this suburb more important than the new suburb being built for the bureaucrats and bosses of the capital.

"Empty Homes and Gentrification"

In our suburb, there are still over 2,000 flats, and whole buildings, empty. Some are no longer relet due to the possibility of their being awarded to previous [pre DDR] owners - among them the many homes owned by the Prenzlauerberg Housing Association [WPG] which are under emergency administration. Flats which need only minor repairs, or are even in lettable condition, stand empty. If not even the most important repairs are done, then these houses fall into further decay and the last tenants move out. Then there are private owners who leave homes empty for speculation. They 'decant' or empty out their homes through bribes to tenants to move, threats but also the use of violence to evict them

In either case the owners can be happy - empty homes are easy money. The value of an empty block is at least 25% more than occupied homes [there's not the same rent controls on new lets - c'flow]. No wonder when it's easier to renovate or sell on an empty house, without stubborn tenants, and then get guaranteed higher rents or profits from 'owner occupied' flats.

The local council can't keep up with its duties to control this deliberate tactic of leaving of flats empty - partly because they are completely overloaded with building work but also through the deliberate use of false ownership details to get permission to leave homes empty. At 74 Dunckerstrasse such a case was brought into the daylight - the building was squatted and through this the community forced it to be re-let.

It appears too, that the standard practice of owners is to make a building application for their empty properties - as a way to put off the council officials who are checking up on empty properties. When this becomes common practice, we'll soon only have still more expensive flats round here. Both the landlords and the council need to be watched.

None of us can afford rent of over 15 marks [per sq metre per month]. And anyone who could afford such rent won't do much to improve the tone of our neighbourhood. Apart from which - when our still fairly low rent is forced up by these higher rents. There's lots of good reasons to fight against empty homes and gentrification. All empty properties should be immediately let to stop this gentrification and housesales profiteering.



No Yuppie Centre at the Culture Brewery!

The Treuhand [the company which privatised the East german state industries] company has owned the 50,000 sq metre Brewery since 1990 when it has been used as an culture centre. Now there are plans to turn it into a gigantic cloned leisure centre with a 1,800 seat multiplex, bars, a food hall complete with the 'worlds largest trestle table' [!?!] TV centre, galleries and exclusive shops for the media luvvies and yuppies.

This redevelopment at the Culture Brewery will further speed up the process of gentrification and evictions. Starting from Kollwitz Square the adjoining areas will also be 'opened up' - posh restaurants, exquisite cocktail bars and yuppie bar will spring up like mushrooms in shit - but no-one who lives there needs them. Instead the neighbourhood bakeries and corner shops leave our area even more quickly. In competition with bars and the like they can't compete while keeping their prices affordable for us. What's left is the monoculture of bars like already exists at Kollwitz Square and by the water tower. We have to remain watchful - and stop each similar development in its infancy. Considering all of this - if 'old' residents in Prenzlauerberg, a 'leisure park' at the Culture Brewery is the last thing we need. Stop the Yuppie Bar

Is a chic capital more important than the people who live here? Should we just disappear from our neighbourhoods? It's clear that that's not what we want - but no one is going to help us unless we help ourselves - organise the neighbourhood resistance."

[the authors can be contacted at "Stadtteilgruppe Prenzlauerberg c/o Kiezladen, DunckerStr. 14 10437, Berlin, FRG" - please ask before writing in languages other than German if you want to be sure of getting an answer.]

translation errors the fault of Euro Counter Network London.

wot i did on my holedays

encounter of the second kind

ENCUENTRO (25th July - 3rd August; Spanish State)

Seeing as I was going to be South of the Pyrenees anyway I decided somewhat sceptically to go to the crap-named Second Intercontinental Gathering for Humanity and against Neo-liberalism (or Encuentro for short), with its grandiose aim of creating a "network of struggles". "Pie in the sky", I thought to myself, (there is a Spanish expression for it: 'construir castillos en el aire' - literally 'to build castles in the air').

So off I went, bundle of Contraflows under my arm, prepared for the worst (we're miserable old sods, us Contraflowes).

The opening ceremony in Alcobendas near Madrid was basically a cheerleading exercise for the Zapatistas, a media circus in line with the virtual struggle being waged by Subcomediante Marcos (as a fellow cynic dubbed him - translatable as Subcomedian Marcos) et al in Chiapas. There's nothing virtual about the repression and terror caused by the Mexican army and the real struggle of the indigenous people in Chiapas, of course; so don't get me wrong, sure I'm all for the EZLN, I just got a bit tired of being told that Zapata lives (and they buried the poor bastard!).

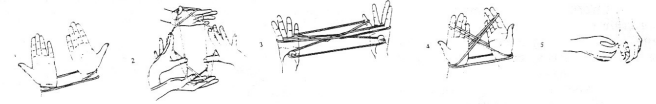
But back to the Encuentro; we were told that there were over 3000 people from all five continents, but it seemed like every second person was Italian (there was a huge contingent, presumably workers' autonomy types, who kept on bursting into choruses of "Long live the international proletarian revolution" or something similar).

So we all divided up to go to the respective discussion tables all over the territory of the Spanish State, the themes being the neo-liberal economy, struggles for culture and education, for land and ecology, the struggle against patriarchy, nationalisms and national identity, exclusion and all forms of marginalisation (it seemed like all the awkward left-over bits like gay and lesbian struggles, animal liberation were chucked together in this last discussion table).

I was supposed to go to the discussion table on the economy, to the subgroup on access to the means of production, but seeing as I thought it would be dominated by dogmatic Marxists with Italian accents (don't get me wrong - I love the Italian accent, it's the other bit I'm not too keen on), I decided to go to the subgroup on "forms of living beyond the Market". This subgroup was being held at the huge squatted social centre El Laboratorio in central Madrid. Now, down at the subgroup level, meaningful participation became a possibility (as opposed to the passive consumption of pre-written political speeches of the opening and closing ceremonies), in fact we divided and subdivided to facilitate discussion and then came together again as a group, something which worked pretty well. After some interesting discussion ... LETS schemes, co-operatives and the like were judged to be within the Market, and not an alternative to it, and the same went for many of the social relations reproduced in the squatting movement and 'alternative scene' (market relations between consumers and sellers are reproduced in squat bookshops, cafes, distros, concerts etc etc). The conclusion was reached that to escape the tentacles of the Market you have to be self-sufficient (grow your own food, make your own clothes etc) or live in communities where by mutual aid and (non-monetary) exchange these needs were covered. The discussion went on to take in themes of industrial development, division of labour, alienation, technology And we heard the example of an indigenous people (the pygmy Baka in Cameroon) who had lived beyond the market until they were coerced into selling their labour by a neighbouring ethnic group.

As a mark of the diversity of the Encuentro, another sub-group on "economic solidarity and alternative economy" held up LETS schemes and 'fair trade' as the way forward (and reliable sources complained of heavy doses of reformism at other discussion tables). But these glaring contradictions didn't stop the organisers of the Encuentro loudly proclaiming the unity of all present at the closing spectacle (sorry, ceremony), even after a fracas over whether Peter Singer was a fascist had threatened to disrupt the whole shebang.

However a lot of networking did seem to be happening, with co-ordinated campaigns against the oil industry planned, and the World Trade Organisation 50th anniversary to be targeted in Geneva in February...



Euro Pot

In June the European leaders met for a summit conference in Amsterdam. They called it the EuroTop, but some people with nothing better to do than cause trouble read this as "EU rot op" which is Dutch for "EU piss off!"

While them indoors were signing the Amsterdam Treaty, tightening police cooperation and attacks on migrants, and removing European Court jurisdiction over law'n order and "security" matters (treatment of refugees etc.), thousands converged on the city for demos, meetings and fun. On Saturday 14th the Euromarch arrived on the streets, having marched from all corners of the continent against unemployment, exclusion, poverty etc. - the demands of the different contingents varied considerably. Of course there was a large contingent of anarchists/syndicalists /autonomes/troublemakers who got into a few fights with the cops, trying to march the 'wrong' way toward the bank where the summit was happening, turning over an empty cop van, shattering some bank windows and trashing flagpoles with the EU flag (but not those with Amsterdam flags). The cops made a few vicious random attacks, but there were too many people to take on.

A couple of thousand Italians had come on 'hijacked' trains, refusing to pay or to show ID at the borders. Most of them were held in the station until after the demo, and 150 of them never even saw Amsterdam, being arrested for supposedly trashing a carriage and carted off, then put back on the train to return. Those who were let out showed great solidarity and 'discipline' demonstrating for the release of their comrades, and making the only decent speech of the rally.

That evening the pissed-up-punks outside the Vranrijk squat bar attacked passing cars (the first was a stretched limo, but there was no excuse for the others) and then marched off to demand the release of the Italians (who were now back on the train) and get beaten up and nicked. The night before the city had put up the Euromarchers at a sports stadium, but those who returned on the Saturday night were surprised to be removed by force by the cops.

Sunday there was a street party, with sound systems, partyers and free grass (in protest at the threat of imposing stupid euro drug laws) were winding through the streets. At two points it passed through police lines trying to divert it from the agreed route, but when it got to the agreed site the cops threatened calling in the riot cops, and it all moved back to the warehouse where it had started. As it was a hot day people needed drinks, but most places were closed as it was Sunday - except a pizza place which was opened so surreptitiously the cops walked straight past the proletarian shoppers going in and out. There was then the advertised sex-riot, but it was just a media stunt in response to the mayor's call to clean up the city's image.



As everybody was getting on the buses to go home in the sweltering heat, a guy from RTS was handing out an inspired piece on networking (or was it his PhD on neurology?) which suggested a way: not one international network but many networks, coming together and diverging... Pie in the sky, or something to get our teeth into?

We have supped on pie in the sky and it tasted good

On a positive note, as someone who helped organise for the Encuentro and has heard other reports back, the network of struggles that developed out of the last Encuentro, inspired by the struggles of the Zapatistas, succeeded in organising the second, and will continue to develop. Just one of the many sections of the Encuentro came up with the following plans of action:

1) Action against the Europe of Maastricht and Amsterdam during the first week of December.

2) Action against the World Trade Organisation, eg a counter summit on 18-20 February 1998 in Geneva and local actions to coincide with the WTO Geneva meeting in May.

3) A day of action against exploitation and precariousness of labour, especially against employment agencies, and for a reduction of work, both paid and unpaid. Date to be set by a network being organised.

So stay tuned, and contact Human c/o BM-CRL London WC1N 3XX for info. Further reading and contacts: <http://www.pangea.org/encuentro> - and for

English language documents from the Encuentro: <http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/3848/gatherds.html>

From late afternoon people leaving the Vrankrijk were jumped and nicked round the corner, and when 200 people set off to march on the police station against previous arrests they were surrounded and nicked, for 'membership of a criminal organisation'. Once they had finally been handcuffed, put on buses and carted off to copshops around the country, the riot cops moved in around anyone hanging out around the Vrankrijk, and till after 3am seemed to be about to try to storm the building.

The next afternoon ten thousand Kurds held an unpublicised demo against Turkish state human rights abuses and EU plans to allow Turkey to join. Later there was a demo linking the Excluders (the EU leaders meeting in the bank) with the Excluded (refugees being held at the detention centre just outside town). Hundreds of people got on their bikes and had a critical mass, going as near the Bank as possible without mass arrests and then off to the detention centre. Another few hundred went by tube and joined in with tunnelling, throwing knotted sheets over the walls, writing messages on tennis balls and whacking them over, and loads of noise. The organisers were a bit pissed off because having thought up all these fun ideas, they thought others would have brought other ideas, or have been inspired to go a bit further. The refugees had their best ever meals, and videos, to keep them away from the windows, but one phoned the next day to say they all knew and welcomed the support.

Back in town a couple of hundred people tried to thank the leaders, bureaucrats etc. for their efforts by going round the hotels and cheering. Despite it proceeding lightheartedly for some time, the riot cops again suddenly closed in and carted everyone off in buses. A few people got away on a passing boat and one guy managed to swim across the canal, but others shouting slogans from across the canal, or just angry at yet another police blockade, got surrounded and nicked too.

The next day amazingly an autonome demo against capitalism managed to take place, and even to get to the floral display of the EU flag in the main square and 'liberate' the flowers.

Other events over this time included a protest action at the summit press conference around various issues excluded from debate, and eco demo that succeeded in getting to the Bank, but not for long, meetings and conferences, um, loads of stuff I forgot.

Demos and actions against the mass arrests were held all over Holland, and all over Europe, including a short occupation of the Dutch embassy in London, there are plans by the organisers to charge those in responsible with membership of a criminal organisation, for conspiring to arrest innocent people and denying them their legal rights. An amazingly quick and detailed account of the arrests, abuse and other events is available from Amsterdam (write to us for details) and a good leaflet version of events is available from Brighton Automotists (who had a great time and want to do it again) c/o Prior House, 6 Tibury Place, Brighton, E Sussex.

Solidarity with Albanian Revolt

In April Greece saw a series of attacks on the army in response to their invasion of Albania as part of a European military policing force. (see Black Flag No. 211 for article on the Albanian revolt)

Train tracks leading to the border were destroyed, stopping troop movements for a couple of days, a recruitment centre was attacked, the phones cut and the soldiers held inside for 5 minutes while the place was covered in graffiti, military vehicles burned out in various actions ... Other government buildings were also attacked, along with an Italian company office because of Italian military involvement, and various solidarity events and gatherings organised.

Of course, Greece is next door to Albania, and Greek anarchists are attacking something at least once a week, but its good to see resistance to these military manoeuvres.



ContraFLOW

Number 24
Jan - Mar '98
donations keep us
FREE

mail: c/o 56a infoshop, 56 Crampton St London SE 17, england
e-mail: new address! "contraflow-london@omega.berlin-net.de"
web: http://www.gn.apc.org/gridlock

This issue is dedicated to
Kim
who died October 27th 1997
aged 32

Much missed by
the ContraFlow crew,
Advisory Service for Squatter
the anarcho rave crew
and all who knew her



Group Therapy Session Causes £375,000 Damage

There's nothing like trashing a load of earth-raping machinery to work out your pent-up frustration (allegedly). This therapeutic orgy of non-random violence happened spontaneously after Earth First! and No Opencast organised a site occupation of Doe Hill House Opencast mine at Tibshelf, near Chesterfield on October 31st.

In a well-organised operation, activists were expected in South Yorkshire and not in Derbyshire, much to the consternation of the local constabularies involved. Once inside the compound at the crack of dawn, seriously spikey pixies set about dismantling pretty much everything in sight as amused workers looked on (apart from one who completely lost it and charged around trying to hit people). The cops were powerless to do anything and only got their revenge hours later miles away in Chesterfield, where they arrested 47 of the 50-odd people (or was it 50 odd people) who had occupied the offices of HJ Banks, the notorious owners of opencast sites (including Doe Hill House).

HJ Banks and RJB Mining have this annoying habit of extending sites on which they have planning permission, and so mining much larger areas than they would originally be allowed to. Entire landscapes are dug out sometimes to a depth of several hundred feet, whole ecosystems are ripped apart, there is air and water pollution, noise and dust of diggers and explosives and the incessant coming and going of heavy lorries... And all this while 140 deep pits have closed and 90 percent of the colliery workforce has been made redundant since the end of the miners' strike in 1985, with all the hardship this has inflicted on mining communities, because "there is no market for coal".

Neither has New Labour looked like improving the situation; the action coincided with the last day for responses to the Department of the Environment's "consultation" document about opencast mining; as usual the private sector and governmental organisations were consulted, and *not* the many locally based anti-opencast groups around the country.

PS A group in Sheffield are organising the defence of the people arrested on the opencast action, a meeting will be happening on the 8th of January, meet at the Sheffield Co-ordinating Centre against Unemployment in West St, at 7pm for transport to the meeting and accommodation. Ring 0441 199477 for more details. (Ring this number as well if you've got building skills and are interested in an exciting Sheffield-based project).

No Opencast is a campaign run by the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and Women Against Pit Closures and by members of the Miners Support Groups. Contact 0171 603 1831.



Get yer CLAWS out against the slave-drivers !

New Labour, New Britain, New Deal.... same definitely-not-New problem of exploitation of alienated labour. Oh yes, that minor problem called wage slavery, that old chestnut! I almost forget, amid the usual flurry of single-issue campaigns flying around (whoever said the single-issue was dead?).

CLAWS, or the Campaign Linking Against Wage Slavery, has been set up in London to try and network and support different struggles that are going on at the moment, and catalyse new struggles against capital and its managers at different levels (G7, European Union, New Labour and their lackeys the unions).

In January, with Britain's presidency of the European Union, London plays host to the "Job Creation Summit", and we all know what that means: according to CLAWS "an unsavoury crew of European Union finance ministers and representatives from the G7 leading capitalist powers will put together proposals to restructure labour markets in order to increase profits for employers and worsen conditions for workers and unemployed". More Mcjobs, more Flexploitation. Its no coincidence that this comes at the same as the "restructuring" and cutting of the welfare budget.

New Labour is bent on dismantling the welfare state; armed with Welfare to Work first they came for the 18-24 year olds on the dole, then single parents, and it looks like the disabled are next in line. Rumour has it that disability benefits are to be targeted for £5 billion cuts: disability living allowance may be taxed, means-tested or translated into rationed community care services; incapacity benefit may become subject to a time limit of 28 weeks. And to add insult to injury (literally), industrial injuries benefits may be abolished with responsibilities passed to employers.

CLAWS was in part inspired by the opposition to the Amsterdam Summit, where people united in opposition to a capitalist Europe, and by the second Encuentro in Spain, where people came together from all over the world to oppose neoliberalism. Neoliberalism incarnate will be in Birmingham in May in the form of the G7 Summit, and then in Cardiff in the form of the EU conference, and groups are already planning resistance.



In the meantime, CLAWS have been active in the struggles of the sacked Hillingdon Hospital workers (at the picket of UNISON who not only have sold out their members, they've kicked them out of the union as well!) and the Liverpool dockers (with the picket of Drake's, scab recruiters for Mersey Docks and Harbour Company), and are busy planning opposition to the New Deal in the piloted areas of low employment, which include Hackney and City. Watch this space, or even better contact Teresa on 0171 613 9267 (day) or 0171 249 3848 (evenings) - also for their leaflet on the 'New Deal - The Claimant's Perspective'.

KISS THE PLANET GOODBYE

So, now that the Climate Conference Circus is over in Kyoto, where does that leave us? Up shit creek without a paddle, in a word. Predictably no meaningful reduction in greenhouse gases was agreed on, with the vested interest in the capitalist mode of production ensuring that everything will continue as before.

Despite an original EU target of 15% reduction in CO₂ by 2005, legally binding targets for 2008 - 2012 are only 8% the UK, 7% for Japan and the USA, with Australia actually permitted to increase its emissions. Even worse is the escape clause insisted on by the USA whereby countries can buy up other countries' quotas of CO₂ emissions, so we might end up with no reduction at all!

Capitalism based on economic growth (on the self-valorisation of capital, if you want to be technical about it) necessarily involves fucking up the environment as well as our lives... and even if capitalism were to be greened (as Greenpeace Ltd, Friends of the Earth, Green Party et al seem intent on) it would still be based on exploitation, alienated labour and be really shit! And don't give me the bullshit anyway....

Back at home, Reclaim The Streets squatted an abandon petrol station during the Kyoto conference, to make the point about climate chaos, fossil fuels, car-culture, petrol company fuelled slaughter and dispossession of indigenous peoples etc. The petrol station was in Angel, Islington and wind generators were set up (although our alternative technology needs to be perfected) and soup dispensed to passing cyclists.

On the final day the street was reclaimed from the traffic a game of footie, with capitalists and world leaders kicking around a blow-up globe, much to the amusement of passers-by and road rage of motorists, but half-time was strategically blown just as the cops moved in to avoid arrests.

And up at Manchester Airport 18 Earth First'ers decked out in chemical suits and gas masks climbed an aerial walk to protest about the totally unnecessary emissions caused by air travel.... they got nicked after disrupting flights for 4 hours.



INSIDE

Mystic Molotov's horoscope:
International roundup:
Trashing the enemy in Dover and
Derbyshire
The usual whinging and much

GANDALF TRIAL: WHO'S NEXT ?

British courts have just seen one of the trials of the decade for the 'alternative' movement. On 13th November 1997, three Green Anarchist editors - Steve Booth, Sax Wood and Noel Molland-got sent down for three years, and GA's Paul Rodgers and Robin Webb from the Animal Liberation Front are awaiting their turn in court. The former are guilty of conspiracy to incite some people unknown to cause unknown criminal damage and disorder, etc. Their appeal has been lodged and will come out in the summer. How did they manage to do what many libertarian writers dream of? Simply by writing reports on direct action. Yes I know, many people do that - including this paper-so, why these people ?

In the case of the ALF, it seems clear that a country where beggars acknowledge that their pets inspire more pity than themselves, should be kept away from such a revolutionary influence. The GA with their confusing anti-anything-more-than-a-wheel rhetoric is a more complex case. They have been probably misunderstood by the authorities because of their campaign in defence of Ted Kaczynski, allegedly an American eco-terrorist who killed three people. Their argument is that those people deserved to die as 'cyberneticians' and ecceders, but poor that Ted is an innocent scape-goat.

Right as they might be, their argument is contradictory. However, we must support them in their plight and fight for their liberation. Not because of their unfair trial. A biased judge with a military past, who allowed for biased juries, could not remember the names of the defendants and had a clear rapport with the prosecution. A defendants witness who had his travel expenses covered by the legal aid scheme was deported when arriving from Canada. The Mounted Police reported him as an 'undesirable alien'. Has anyone heard about the violent end of the separatist armed movement in Quebec, and the systematic (legal) tapping of all pagers and mobiles for under-25's? Nevertheless, who's got a fair trial? Not because of conspiracy laws that make this country like "apartheid South Africa or Soviet Russia" (Free Gandalf press release). Who said it was different? Not because Sax Wood is dyslexic, and did not know what he was distributing. Neither because Combat18 only got eighteen months. The "death of democracy" (Gandalf press release) should not be a reason. Whose democracy is it anyway?

It is clear that this is a political trial, but it should not come as a surprise for those who are involved in resistance to POWER. Writing has always been an extremely valuable weapon for those with a will to change the status quo. These activists deserve our support mainly for two reasons. Firstly, they are fighting against the same system that all libertarians are fighting, however different their reasons may be: You do not have a problem to choose between them and Tony Blair, for your support. Secondly, and much more important, this verdict opens the door for a new level in state repression of the alternative media and movement. This is not a declaration of war, but the opening of a new front.

However this can be a good opportunity for those on the traditional losers' side to unite, and also to spread the message outside the ghetto. Good liberals are quite sensitive to this kind of repression on writing, and many real people too. Unfortunately, the last attempt to do so was only partially successful. A meeting in Conway Hall (London) on 17th December organised by London Greenpeace saw a huge number of well known faces of the alternative South East. After a briefing on this case and other successful anti-libel campaigns -McLibel- a solidarity statement was discussed. Some amendments were made and there was a general agreement to make this a common issue for the alternative movement. However the movement could not agree to make this a broader issue. Mass media have not shown an excessive interest, but Ch4 broadcasted a ten minute clip with interviews to GA and ALF in ... a Nature program!! This means that some people there have interest and are blogging their way.

The next meeting for the co-ordinated defence of the GANDALF 3 will be at Conway Hall place on Wednesday 28th of January.

Contacts: Gandalf Defendants Campaign,
PO Box 66, Stevenage SG1 2TR, 0956 694922.
London Greenpeace 5 Caledonian Rd, London N1 9DX.

The Guardian Saturday November 8 1997

Unions condemn leaflet telling staff how to disrupt flights

BRITISH Airways has launched an inquiry into black propaganda leaflets telling staff how to delay flights by putting duvet feathers in an engine or placing superglue on toilet seats.

It said yesterday that police were investigating a newsletter called Chaos, circulating inside the company for the past few weeks. It tells staff how they can earn extra money by causing maximum inconvenience to the company, including sabotage.

The leaflet was condemned by union leaders. Gordon White, a senior official of Cabin Crew 88, said it was the work of "an ultra-leftist faction" in the industry, trying to make mischief between nile company and the Transport and General Workers' Union, the largest union at Heathrow.



BALL LOST IN RUCK ON DOVER SEAFRONT

In an attempt to give the National Front a mauling on November 15th, several hundred anti-fascists instead got diverted into a game of rugby with no ball with the cops on Dover seafront. The reason for this sporting encounter was an opportunistic march called by the Fash, riding on the back of the anti-gypsy hysteria whipped up by all sections of the national media, with Labour following in the Tories' xenophobic footsteps on asylum and immigration policy. Romany gypsies fleeing persecution in Eastern Europe have been portrayed as spongers coming to "scrounge benefits in soft-touch Britain" (Jimmy Davis and Jimmy Nolar Dockers' Stewards Committee).

Just to give an idea of what things are like for the Romanies in Eastern Europe, as reported in SchNews there have been 28 racist murders of Romani in the Czech republic in the last 7 years, with countless injuries and fire-bombings. Police are reluctant to intervene and sometimes display open sympathy for the attackers. In the Slovak Republic, 17 Romanis were killed and several hundred injured between 1990 and 1996. The Romani are constantly discriminated against and stereotyped as 'work-shy', problem tenants', 'petty criminals' and 'unhygienic', with Romani children being banned from public swimming pools on the grounds that they might spread disease... this is the nightmare Romanis are trying to escape from when they seek asylum in Britain.

Meanwhile, in Dover the fascists were forced to beat a hasty retreat, being whisked away aboard a bus as they looked like being engulfed by the rugby game. AFA (as usual) got to the best location early and physically confronted the fash as well as breaking some police dog teeth on their biceps. The Briton and London crustie crew did well advancing some 500 metres against the police and completing the pincer movement. Not bad, but as someone suggested maybe we should also be mobilizing against The Sun, The Standard, etc for the xenophobic filth they peddle, and while we're about it The Guardian as well, who covered themselves in ignominy by resembling the more reactionary press at the height of the hysteria....



Oh no! Not another boring disillusioned-activist's article! Yes, it's another in that fine ContraFlow tradition of burnt-out offerings (see 'Flow no. 16 "Why we must smash ContraFlow!" if you're in any doubt)...

REVOLUTIONARIES WITHOUT A REVOLUTION

Why don't you..... just put down your ContraFlow and go and do something far more interesting instead? Why is it that ContraFlow (and any other counter-information rag for that matter) just seems like a series of unconnected news stories? Why did someone, at the recent exhibition at the 121 Centre where you were asked to complete the sentence "I don't care about", write "I don't care about which squat social centre has been evicted in Europe, which demo the riot cops broke up in Berkeley, about the military repression in Kurdistan, about the latest guerrilla uprising in Latin America..." (or words to that effect)?

(and why is the above as close to politics as we get?)

Okay, so why is politics so boring? And why do people think politics is separate from real life, or something politicians do, and not something we do? Why do activists burn out? Why do all the old slogans ring so hollow? And what's the alternative? "Fuck politics, I'm going to get a life"? What is it that makes 'getting a life' a more attractive option than keeping up 'the struggle, comrade'? Isn't it a terrible indictment of our scene that individual solutions are seen as more attractive than collective ones?

Dockers Updates

"... we extend our warm thanks to our supporters all over the world. ... We know our decision to refuse 'Judas money' - the £28,000 offered to us to surrender - marks a new stage in the long and continuing fight against privatisation, casualisation and anti-trade union laws.

We take this opportunity to express our solidarity greetings to all other striking workers. Special mention must be made of the Hillingdon Hospital workers, who have been fighting for as long as us and the sacked Magnet workers in Darlington.

... We have been fighting for reinstatement for nearly 3 years, we thank you for the tremendous financial support you have given, but we think the time has come for a principled stand. You face the same fundamental attacks on wages, working conditions and trade union rights.

We need your physical support at this time. A broad united stand is needed for us and for you!

Jimmy Davis and Jimmy Nolar
Dockers' Stewards Committee

30 months on strike seems an eternity. The 70% No vote to MDHC 'final offer' was a rejection by dockers of an amount of money which would have had most people asking where to sign. Most Contraflow readers will have done something for the Dockers - gone to Merseyside, gone to the March for Social Justice, given what we could afford. To win now, against all the odds, requires new effort.

For info' contact the Dockers Shop Stewards on 0151 207 3388 or come to London Support Group Meetings - Thursdays, 7 PM at the Somerstown Community Centre, 150 Ossulton St. NW1, near Kings X Tube. This venue is wheelchair accessible.

BILLBOARD

PARAMILITARY SCAB THREAT BEATEN (FOR NOW)

A plan to train 70 mercenaries to scab in Australian docks has been scuppered by pressure from international dockworkers. The 70 were in a Free Enterprise Zone port in Dubai and were expected to return to Australia at the end of February to take part in further training with another 150 mercenaries and regular troops, but a threat to boycott the port scared the government into telling them to leave. The jobs were advertised in the newspaper of the Australian armed forces (who are currently planning job cuts) by a company run by two ex-soldiers, Mike Wells and Peter Kilfoyle who are believed to have been SAS commandos. Wells was decorated for his activities in Vietnam by both the Australian and US governments.

The Australian government has been looking for a way to take on the dockworkers, under pressure from mining and farming interest who are well represented in the Liberal government. [And of course the Liberals can draw on the fine example set by the previous Labour government who used the Air Force to smash a pilots strike in 1998-99.] A leader of the National Farmers Federation, who has led union-busting activities in other industries is now on an advisory committee on the Workplace Relations Act, the Australia version of anti-worker, anti-solidarity action legislation. The dockers have one of the strongest unions in the country, and gave full support to the recent day of action for the Liverpool dockers. The government have known of employers' plans to take on the dockers for some time, and suggested they wait until their laws against secondary action came in.

BLACKOUT!!

Or maybe it's that in our political scene / "movement" (sic - movement normally describes something that is actually going somewhere) none of the collective solutions are actually tried out?

Have you ever felt like a professional activist? Why this division of labour? How can we do something meaningful in the absence of revolution? ("Revolution? Ha! There ain't gonna be no revolution, the working-class won't be able to get the day of work and the punks will be too busy doing their hair!" - ex ContraFlow member) How can we 'Think-Global -Act Local'? (censored by the ContraFlow cliché detector). How can we get together and 'take control of our lives'? How can we actually do something, here and now (ie not just talk about it), and make a difference? Does anybody care? Is there anybody out there? What am I doing here?

Answers on a postcard

please (we'll print the best ones in the next issue)



VIVA SASÉ - LAND AND FREEDOM

Sasé was just one of hundreds of abandoned villages in the Aragonese Pyrenees, until it was occupied two years ago by the 'Colours Collective'. Abandoned in the '50s & '60s due to the lure of the city and the increasing pressures of cattle-men and right-wing landlords, Sasé is now 'owned' by the local authority, Diputacion de Aragon (DGA). The village is many centuries old: it contains about 40 houses most of them in ruins. It has extensive terracing, which is now closely planted - like the surrounding mountains - with a monoculture of young red pine. There's a river, huge oak woods, lots of fruit trees....

The Colours Collective moved in with their children and animals in 1995, having had previous experience of living in camps and in Primout, an occupied village in León. The collective includes skills like crafts, organic agriculture, traditional music and circus performance - they wanted to reconstruct the village in harmony with the environment. Decisions are made collectively by assembly. Sasé is a steep (6km climb from the nearest road, or a 15km drive by land-rover on a forest track only open in summer. The village is 1300m above sea-level.

With most of the villages deserted (many for reservoir schemes), this part of the Pyrenees is dominated by tourism, cattle, military police (Guardia Civil) barracks, and a big Opus Dei centre. The DGA have never seriously negotiated. In 1996 the Sasé villagers were lured down to a pathetic temporary camp, with the promise of a legalised village but conditions were appalling and Sasé was reoccupied.

The village was violently evicted in October 1997 and 37 residents held overnight (the other 100 camped outside, without food, in sub-zero temperatures) on charges including "Resistance to Authority" - after a hunger-strike 35 were bailed on condition of not returning to Sasé. The two remaining prisoners were additionally charged with "Attack on Authority" and transferred to Saragossa and Huesca. The camp continued for a week - as did the hunger strike - and the protest spread as support demo's were held in Saragossa and Barcelona.

FARMERS REVOLT IN EGYPT

In November dozens of tenant farmers were detained without trial, and tortured to make them sign over land they farmed to the landlords. Over the year the struggle has led to 27 deaths, 200 injuries and a thousand arrests. The struggle was started by a 1992 law which ended rent control on land, and allowed landlords to treble rents. 3/4 million families are said to be effected as the landlords use the new law to screw more profit out of 1/6 of the country's agricultural land. The former farmers, unable to afford the new rents are becoming day labourers or drifting into the cities where conditions are no better, or are resisting.

Busted ? - A security alert ...

October 1997 saw the partial uncovering of a long term police infiltration - surveillance operation aimed at left and autonomous groups in Melbourne, Australia. As well as spying on Koori [Aboriginal], migrant, gay and church organisations; particular attention was paid to unwaged and squatters groups and the autonomous [non NUS] wing of the student movement.

Some of the points that can be drawn from the mass media coverage are as follows:

* Formal prohibition of political spying by the [slightly left] labour [then] Government had no effect - files were merely transferred on from Special Branch when it was shut down and removed by the fifth shortly before visits by the Ombudsperson investigating what had happened to them. There was ready co-operation with military and national secret police.

* Infiltration was generally focused on networking structures - community radio stations, cross campus action committees, environment centres etc. - except where a small group was considered dangerous enough to be targeted - e.g. an unemployed workers group. Infiltrators were used to identify 'rioters' from video footage - in a similar way to the F.I.T squad of the Met.

* The undercover fifth worked very hard! - putting up bill posters and shelves, saving ducks, being shot at by loggers, and happily taking our drugs to do all night radio programmes [bastards!]. Seriously, though, they tended to carry out administration tasks which gave them access to as much information as they wanted.

However publicity was mostly confined to the (unsympathetic) local press - reports headlined the DGA's claim that they had used "patience and delicacy" in carrying out the eviction, described the villagers as "human rubbish" - and incredibly, the (socialist) Botania council offered them a camp-site on the edge of the town dump! After a week - and more protests/graffiti/leafletting in the local area - the two prisoners were released, and a new camp set up by the river. It served as a focal point for visitors and supporters to gather, and plan for a national demonstration in Saragossa (the regional capital) despite the site being flooded by a particularly severe storm.

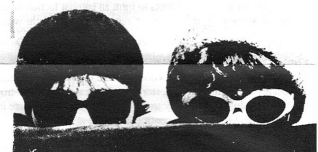
On Sat 8th, 2000 people came together in a mass demo which culminated in hours of police-free street-partying outside the government HQ, then the formation of a new street-camp in the Plaza de la Constitucion. Simultaneous actions were held in support across Spain, in Paris and Berlin. Messages arrived from around the world, including one from Chiapas. On Sunday 9th there was another demonstration about the villagers of Becette (due to disappear under yet another reservoir), and links made between the two struggles.

On Tuesday 11th, a march/ mobile exhibition left Saragossa city for Sasé (180km away). On the same day fierce winds brought the first heavy snow to the Pyrenees.... with love and rage ... to be continued.....

HOW YOU CAN HELP SASÉ

- demonstrate outside Spanish embassies/ consulates
 - come and help! bring warm clothing!
- CONTACTS
- the new Sasé mobile phone: 989/ 39 95 80
 - Saragossa camp: Entropia info-shop 976/ 29 57 47
 - internet: <http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/lobby/8527>

(edited version - for full version send s.a.c. to ContraFlow)



Interestingly, the fundamentalists are also supporting the increases - so many farmers are caught between the government terrorists on the one hand and the Islamist terrorists on the other. Send messages of support to Land Centre for Human Rights, c/o Al-Ahaly, 23 Abdel Khalek Tharwat St. Cairo Egypt. (Fax: 00-202-3900412)



* The police recruited to work as infiltrators were generally recruited straight from police academy so as to appear a little like cops as possible. They were then given false identities, 'home' phone numbers and Post Boxes. It do appear that full 'deep' infiltration was used (i.e. living 24 hours a day as an infiltrator) but the infiltrators did study on the Marxist classics enough to give a talk on national and socialist feminism - though not to avoid talking about 'mostly lesbian persons'!

* Disorganisation was sometimes the best defence against police infiltration - e.g. the successful attack on Thatcher 1988 [on a visit to Oz] took place in a context of other organisations attempting to stop the 'wrong' demonstration taking place and so Thatcher had only a few police to defend her against an 'unofficial' demo.

* As revolutionaries, we must consider more seriously the question of security, and the tension that rises within a group between its need for security as a defence against repression, and its need for openness without which it becomes very difficult to educate, agitate and organise amongst the masses. We must be careful not to get drawn into the game of 'finger the COP' as this could raise a lev of divisiveness that could destroy any hope of a broad based mass movement for revolution.

*P00257 in Rank and File N6
Box 103 West Brunswick 3055, Vic. Austrs

Anyway - for the campaigners fighting for the survival of Long Billed Corella - it's clear that fighting for endangered species endangers the health of the state.

NEWS FROM HUNGARY

The effects of the stabilisation program are starting to show themselves: the labour movement is strengthening. Although "the macro-economical data are getting better", discontent is becoming wider. There are more and more often strikes, factory barricades, demos by workers because they have not got their wages. We know of about 10-15 such events.

A thousand workers of a meat factory in Szekszard (a small country town) have regularly demanded a wage rise since privatisation of their workplace (the owner is some German fellow). Management sacked active workers one by one and reorganised the firm to divide the workers. Finally in the summer of 1997 the owner left the country, and the workers blockaded the building to prevent the removal of equipment and stores. Recently the firm was being reprivatised. The workers said they would smash up the whole factory as they still hadn't received their wages. In the end they were paid from state sources.

The privatisation of the energy industry also provoked some local demos in the workplaces concerned, and at the same time of course energy prices have gone up. They continue with the "rationalization" of the healthcare system: hospitals are closed down making a lot of workers redundant. The demos also continue, with more or less success.

For a one month period in February-March tens of thousands of people were demonstrating with their vehicles against new agricultural taxes in over a hundred places around the country. These actions were organised mainly by the middle farmers (so not by the agrarian proletariat) with strong nationalist voices. The main organisers firmly cooperated with the two leading populist-fascistoid parties (FKGP - Independent Party of Small Farmers: the strongest parliamentary opposition and MIEP - Party of Hungarian Justice and Life: extra-parliamentary anti-Semitic, chauvinist party). the aim of the nationalist forces was clearly to increase their popularity and to channel the anger of the agrarian workers - in the general interests of capital.

March 8th Budapest. There was a demonstration with 200 vans in front of the Parliament. Two weeks later the police forbid a similar action - Ha-ha! Any cars or other vehicles can be an important weapon of the contemporary proletarian movement; within a few minutes a barricade can be built.

In the end of February there were rumours about the bankruptcy of the second biggest bank (Postabank); within 4 days small depositors took out \$US 135.5 million. Only significant state intervention saved the bank from real bankruptcy. Masses of frightened and angry people gathered for days in front of the bank buildings. A lot of people recognised the similarity between these events and those in Albania some weeks before: there also the proles were robbed of what little money they had left. This was the main reason for the state intervention - the government had to emphasise stability in money matters for weeks.

The ongoing expansion of the Church ("re"-capturing buildings, schools etc.) provokes bigger and bigger hatred every day. "Vandal" actions against them (attacks on pilgrim-places, destruction of churches under construction) happen more and more often. The last few years show a rising discontent against capitalist conditions, and as Hungary is a future member of NATO and the EU, a greater fall in living standards is sure to come.

Class struggle is increasing!
Contact PF107, 5351 Tiszaföld, Hungary

INDIAN WORKERS' ACTION

2183 workers at Jhalani Tools (India) Ltd in Faridabad have not been paid for 16 months (as of August 1st), while the three plants are still in operation. Realising that the unions and leaders are working with management, workers have been organising into groups of 5-10 to fight for their money, and by July two thousand workers had organised themselves in this way. The state / management / union leaders have responded by harassment, persecution and investigations against active workers.

People are asked to send protest letters to the Prime Minister of India via the Indian Ambassador, India House, Aldwych, London WC2. Info: Majdoor Library, Autopin Jhuggi, N.I.T., Faridabad 1121001, India

Reviews

NAZIS IN OUR MIDST?

Ecofascism: Lessons from the German Experience
by Janet Biehl and Peter Staudenmaier
- £5 from AK Press

In Germany it seems that a few little green and vegan nazi groups have got close enough to the eco-action movement for the hard left and AntiFa to decide that all green groups are contaminated and should be wiped out. Meanwhile racist attacks are on the increase (according to official figures) while the anti-fascist movement seems increasingly unable to mobilise.

Part of the left's fear of the greens comes from the issues covered by this book - the fact that in Germany in the 20s and 30s, the green/hippy movement became a recruiting ground for the Nazi 'blood and soil' movement, for claims of a link between 'race' and particular environment, for a simplistic critique of international finance capital (identified by the nazis with 'the Jews') destroying communities and nature (see also 'Notes on Anti-Semitism' in Common Sense reviewed below). Of course it is also true that Mussolini came from a left/syndicalist background, that all sorts of partial critiques became integrated into fascist ideology, and greens also took part in left and anti-state movements.

rogeR theEsAurus's 1998 horRorScope

Abolish the capitalist mode of prediction!

Crapicorn (Dec 22 - Jan 20) In May things really kick off, on the streets, taking over factories, distribution centres and computer centres. You are surprised to find that everyone else seems to be of the same star sign. By June the revolt is crushed due to the fact that 11/12 of the population seem not to know or care about it.

Aqua Vita (Jan 21 - Feb 19) You are accused of being a "state asset" by a certain journal, and get cut off the dole for not declaring your work, because your Project Work officer happens to read the journal, just for a laugh. Attempts to form an entryist faction of the Church of Scientology are unlikely to succeed during months with an "r" in them.

Fishies (Feb 20 - March 20) After waiting more than an hour for a Northern line train home from work, you, and the rest of the waiting passengers as if with one mind, storm up the escalators and destroy the barriers. Moving on swiftly to the control centre, you declare it under joint worker/passenger control. Romance is in the air.

Hairies (March 21 - April 20) Arriving home drunk one summer's night you finally come out to your grandparents. You're suprised to find that not only are they happy, they have many stories to tell you about their friends, demos and stuff. You realise that "youth" is the commodity that sells other commodities, and set up a local history workshop.

Tourists (April 21 - May 21) Project Work finally catches up with you and you choose to go on the "Environmental Taskforce". This turns out to be painting green boards round the local toxic waste dump. You use the paint for graffiti instead and find yourself on a new scheme, chained to an oar on a galley ship.

Gems (May 22 - June 2) The "asylum seeker" you've been putting up for three weeks confesses to being a Daily Mail journalist in disguise. You take her to meet some real asylum seekers and she writes a great article, which doesn't get published.

Cancer (June 22 - July 23) When things hot up in a Singapore, you go out to visit an old schoolfriend who's teaching English out there, and send regular reports back to ContraFlow. Within months you're delegated to represent the local soviet at the international conference in liberated Sardinia, but on the way meet up with the IMF's new peace keeping force and disappear.

Loo (July 24 - Aug 23) With Jupiter in ascendant in mid August, make sure your balaclava is on before they start taking photos.

Virgins (Aug 24 - Sept 23) While doing up your new squat, you find large amounts of gold under the floor boards. You join the Decadent Action spending spree, have a great time, and bring down capitalism.

Liberta (Sept 24 - Oct 23) Your collective breaks up as every member has now slept with each other, so nobody has any incentive to come to meetings. Heartbroken, you are horizontally recruited by the RCP.

Sciopera (Oct 24 - Nov 22) The year starts well with thousands of workers and autonomes from around Europe turning up to disrupt the G7 Jobs Summit. The West End is liberated for a night, followed by increasing numbers of town centres around the country. March is not a good time for romance, and your lover will probably leave you for a bank clerk.

Shagitarious (Nov 23 - Dec 21) While doing up your new squat, you find Jack Straw in the basement drinking alcopops after 10pm. You are locked up forever under the Official Secrets Act.

At a recent discussion, meant to discuss these issues, German comrades and others were disappointed to find themselves instead subjected to a talk on how it couldn't happen here because we have "assets" who will spot the nazis for us before they can do any damage. Instead of allowing a debate on how we can strengthen our movement to ensure that fascist and other anti-human ideas are defeated and overcome, we were told that the problem is that fascist infiltrators are used by M15 and its "assets" to discredit the movement. In order to promote their importance as witchfinders, the speakers even managed to find a heretic within our midst to prove their powers. Unfortunately for them they failed to come up with any evidence and went off in a huff at the movement's failure to recognise their powers of nazi-spotting.

We have much to learn from this book, from the past and from the experiences of those today fighting racism in its many forms. We have to be clear that while working locally, sustainability is a global issue. There can be no 'greenness in one country'. That communities are no longer just local, but stretch out across different levels of space and time, and our struggles must include and empower all, must be internationalist. That the task is the self-liberation of humanity from the forms of alienated power that stand above and against us, that force us to live through money instead of through socially controlling our production alongside the rest of nature. The enemy is not a conspiracy ('conspiracies' are so easily racialised) but the alienated forms that our own social activity takes in this fucked up world, the power we give away, and those who use this power against us. We have to be open to constant discussion to help us develop our ideas and our strength (though obviously not open to those we oppose).



ContraFlow Calender

JANUARY

Now on: SUFFOLK
Land occupation to defend Ancient Water Meadows against Green King access Road, Bury St Edmunds. All welcome. Tel: Linda Walton 01284 701301

LONDON
Squatted Water Board property in Chingford being transformed into People's Park, meeting space, with alternative energy, permaculture, sustainable housing and much more. Tel: 0181 523 9408 for info.

6th-11th: NEWBURY
Newbury bypass 2nd anniversary events. Tel: 01635 45554
Fri 16th: LONDON
East London Hunt Sabs benefit with Chineapple Punx, Static and Portent, at The Acton Arms, 296 Kingsland Road, Hackney, London E8

Sat 17th ContraFlow and Anarquist
discussion on **sexuality**, to talk about our attitudes to lesbian and gay/bi-/trans-/queer/and hetero-sexuality (or none of the above) and sexual politics. 2pm at 121 Centre, 121 Ralton Rd, Brixton

Sat 17th: GLASTONBURY
Benefit gig for Dead Womans Bottom (Bulls Green) quarry protest, at Glastonbury Assembly Rooms, High St.

NOTTINGHAM
Organising meeting for Mayday 98 Bradford conference (see below) Tel: 0117 907 3667
17-18th: WEST COUNTRY
West Country Earth First! activist gathering. Contact 01225 312688

Sun 18th: OXFORDSHIRE
Demo against Hillgrove Farm (cat breeders for vivisection) 12 noon at Dry Lane, A4047 Witney/Burford Rd, Oxfordshire. Tel: 0121 632 6460

Tues 20th: LONDON
Public meeting: "From Welfare to Workfare: The New Raw Deal". Speakers: Martyn Jones, Manchester University; Jon O'Neill, Mansfield Unemployed Workers Centre; and Brighton Against the JSA. 7.30pm at the Lucas Arms, 245 Grays Inn Rd WC1 Kings Cross.
Tel: Conference of Socialist Economists 0171 607 9615

Wed 21st: SOUTHSEA
Undercurrents 8 video showing 7.30pm at The Wedgewood Rooms, Albert Rd, Southsea, Hants.

FEBRUARY

Tues 17th: LONDON
Public meeting: "The Internet: Actually Existing Communism?" with Richard Barbrook. 7.30pm at the Lucas Arms, 245 Grays Inn Rd WC1 Kings Cross.
Tel: Conference of Socialist Economists 0171 607 9615

But too often discussion is destroyed by a terminology that causes defensive reaction and counter-attack instead of debate. When code words like "fascism" stand in for the discussion and analysis of issues, the issues get lost in counter-accusations, petty arguments over definitions, the complete bafflement and loss of interest of those not directly involved and specialists setting themselves up to police the borders of the movement. To get back to the book that this rant was meant to be a review of, it is and should be treated as an important historical analysis to help us all discuss and develop our movement and our future.

(p.s. while spellchecking this, the computer's suggestion for M15 was 56A!!!! does my computer know something I don't?)

Aufheben No. 6; long but readable (1st half of) analysis of Russian state capitalism and Trot ideas, plus reflections on Class War and review of books on the Situationists. Well worth £2 (£5 sub for 3 issues in UK) c/o Prior House, Tilbury Place, Brighton BN2 2GY.

Common Sense No. 21 £3.95; slightly disappointing 10th anniversary issue, but still the best theoretical journal around, dem. genealogy of the EEC showing its roots in the needs of US capital, post-modernist analysis of the discourse of the Zapatistas (or at least the Zapatistas as most of the public discourse seems to come from Sub-Commandante Marcos); Toni Negri once again confusing his interesting analysis with some recent current event that doesn't really prove his point, and confusing co-operative social labour (what we all take part in) with its privileged specialists (him being lecturer); great critique of 'globalisation' ideology; fine 'Notes on anti-Semitism', though there seems to be an unwarranted equation of anti-semitism and anti-zionism in the preface, plus reviews.

Eclipse and Re-emergence of the Communist Movement by Gilles Dauve (formerly known as Jean Barrot) & Francois Martin, £3 from Antagonism Press c/o BM Makino, London WC1N 3XX; for those who haven't read it before this is a brilliant analysis of what communism is - the real movement of human community against the vampire of capitalism (to simplify somewhat). For those who have, here's a fine new introduction, some amendments, and a lovely shiny cover.



MARCH

7-8th LONDON
"The Zapatista Challenge", a conference about solidarity activities in Britain and worldwide; what do the Zapatistas mean for our struggles? At Praxis, Pott St E1 near Bethnal Green tube. Organised by the Zapatista Challenge Network. Tel: Tony 0181 679 6930
17th LONDON
Public Meeting: "Building Counterpower, Learning from the Zapatistas" with Massimo De Angelis. 7.30pm at the Lucas Arms, 245 Grays Inn Rd WC1 Kings Cross
Tel: Conference of Socialist Economists 0171 607 9615

APRIL

21st: LONDON
Public Meeting: "Commodifying the Body". Speakers David King (GenEthics News) and Naomi Pfeffer (University of North London). 7.30pm at the Lucas Arms, 245 Grays Inn Rd WC1 Kings Cross
Tel: Conference of Socialist Economists 0171 607 9615

MAY

1st-4th BRADFORD
National Conference to break down barriers, bring people together, have a good time, empower us in our struggles against capitalism, kickstart the revolutionary movement... Organised by ex-Class War and friends.
Contact Mayday 98 - tel: 0117 907 3667
1st PORTSMOUTH
"Reclaim May Day" - speakers, stalls, band, DJ. Evening. Unity Hall, Arundel St, Portsmouth, Hants.
Contact Portsmouth May Day Collective, Box 5, 167 Fawcett Rd, Southsea, Hants PO4 0DH

Regular events:

- London Support Group for the Liverpool Dockers: Thursdays at 7pm, Somerstown Community Centre, 150 Ossulston St, NW1
- Brownwood Rd Squat Cafe: Sunday evenings, Brownwood Rd Library, N4
- 121 Centre Cafe and Bookshop: Mondays and Thursdays, 7-10pm, 121 Ralton Road, Brixton SE24
- 56a Infoshop: Thurs and Fridays 3-7pm, 56 Crampton St SE17

ContraFLOW

the 'oops the articles were too long again supplement' - number 2.

The Assassination of Diarmuid O'Neill

23/9/96 - West London

Crashing noise
Smashing glass
Voices shouting
Sound of bangs (CS gas being fired)

"We give up!"
"All right!" "Whoah, whoah..."
"We're unarmed!"
"Armed police, stay on the floor!"
"Get on the fucking floor now!"
"Okay, we're down, we're down!"
"Open that door!"
"Okay!"
"Show me your hands now!"
"They're up, They're up!"
"We're on the deck!"
"Show me your hands through the door!"
"Show me your hands through the door!"
"Okay!"
"Show me your hands through the door!"
"Okay!"
"Open 'em them!"
"Open it!"
"Your hands. Your hands!"

Shouting
Firearms sounds Words unclear

"Fucking Hell!"

Firearm sounds
Shouting
"Dead as a fucking rat!"
"Just stay on the floor!"
"Stay on the floor!"

Info - BM Box D. O'Neill
London WC1N 3XX



Solidarity Organising in North West and East South

Unfortunately, it's not the report about the growing internationalism of our class leading to the smashing of international capital... but almost as good, the formation of local solidarity groups in much of London - here goes:

North London - Haringey Solidarity Group ... has been going for yonks and in December leafleted Tottenham TESCOs against New Labour's New Deal warning Totty's 'happy shoppers' about the dangers of the Government's so-called 'New Deal' for the unemployed. They say:

"The New Deal will be introduced at the beginning of 1998, under the banner of 'opportunity' and 'participation' in a 'Giving Society'. However, the reality of Labour's Brave New World of working for benefits (workfare) or being forced into poorly paid, insecure, exploitative jobs, will be a million miles away from this idea

We are leafleting TESCO'S because they are one of several major high street companies who have committed themselves to helping the Government implement the New Deal. Others include Sainsbury's, Marks and Spencer, Boots, W.H. Smith and several major banks."

For info contact 0181 374 5027

South London - ... three meetings have been held of a new south London direct action group [DAGs maybe?] to take action on things like police brutality, CCTV, ecology issues and housing.

For info contact c/o 0171 978 8214



MAYDAY!

BRADFORD '98

There seems a lack of momentum in the 'non-aligned' movement (whatever that is). Very few groups talk to each other, some campaigns and campaigners think others are irrelevant, individuals around the country want to get involved in politics but hate all they see - SWP, Labour and the like. We are coming to the year 2000 and we are no nearer what they want, on a world wide scale, than we were 10 or 100 years ago - or am I missing something?

So, a number of us from around the country have got together and are trying to get all of us meeting up and talking to each other. Some of us are ex-Class war, but there are also people from a number of other groups around the country.

We are organising a conference in Bradford over the long weekend of 1st to 4th of May 98 to link in with events comrades from the Bradford 1 in 12 Club are organising for the same weekend. The aims of the conference are: breaking down barriers; bringing people together; having a good time; inspiring and empowering us in our struggles against capitalism; reviving and strengthening local groups and other groupings in that struggle; kick-starting the revolutionary movement; and any others you feel are relevant.

The conference will start with a Mayday march (following on from last year's successful march in Bradford) and there will be a variety of entertainment (gigs, films, plays etc.) a bookfair and meetings. At the moment the agenda is only in a proposal stage - but it will be firmed up fairly shortly. We want this conference to get away from simply issuing statements at each other and to be an open, honest and positive gathering of people involved in struggling against capitalism and authority. We hope that this will play a part in the process of making us more effective and efficient as revolutionaries.

We expect somewhere around 400 people to come along and take part. Further details will be sent out as and when we have them as things are moving fast around organising the whole event. If you want more details or to be kept informed you can either contact MAYDAY 98, BM BOX 5538, London WC1N 3XX, or drop a line to HSG, P.O. Box 2474, London N8 marked 'Mayday 98', or watch this space for details.



West London - ... people in W6, 10, 12 and NW10 who have class struggle, libertarian, anti hierarchical and anti capitalist politics and who are open minded [!?!] are getting together to form a West London Solidarity group.

"Many outsiders see West London as posh, and its certainly true ... that there's more than our fair share of the aristocracy, rich and famous ... In reality, the West has the same problems as elsewhere - infamous prisons, grotty estates, public services shortages, poverty and racism. But like elsewhere, there's also a strong history of resistance struggles and actions in the West, that reflect the cultural diversity we have ..."

For info contact WAR c/o BM Makhno, London, WC1N 3XX

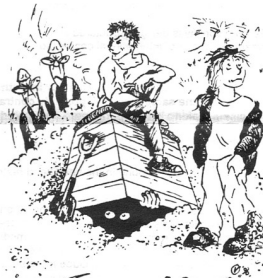
East London - ... people in Tower Hamlets have been meeting in the Pub - and can be contacted through Contraflow, meanwhile the Brownswood Rd Library is not evicted yet - and will be there in Finsbury Park at least until the end of March - cabs every Sunday Night.

LIFE IN THE FASLANE

Faslane Peace Camp hosted a fabulous fiery weekend of solstice festivities over 20-22 December, culminating in a successful blockade of the Base on Monday: the morning shift of workers were delayed from getting to work for over an hour. Unfortunately a young protestor had her arm dislocated by MOD police, and is currently seeking any witnesses (she was wearing a furry hat and cat-like face-paint on the day) so if you can help, contact the Camp please!

There aren't any big actions planned for the next few months. The eviction case is due back in court in April, and in the meantime visitors and residents are very welcome at any time. There's lots to do, and lots of things on the Wish-List: (even if you can't get it there, the Camp may be able to organise/ subsidise transport)
SCAFFOLDING - bicycles - wheelbarrows - rope - paint & brushes - chains - tarps - shovels - untreated firewood - gardening stuff - other tools - warm bedding - candles - paraffin - CB sets - mobile phone - dictaphones - batteries - large pots and kettles - food storage containers - calor gas cookers - flasks - vegan foodstuffs - groovy tapes and songs (and lots more)

Contact Faslane Peace Camp, Shandon, Helensburgh G84 8NT. Tel. 01436 820 901.



Tunnel? What tunnel? old capitalism ... NEW CONTRAFLOW?

Some of us who've been involved in producing ContraFlow for some time have become disatisfied with how it comes out, and have been talking about some changes.

Instead of being so reactive, and just writing about whatever happens to inspire us individually at the time when ContraFlow is about to go to press, we want each issue in future to have an article that is the result of some discussion and that helps develop our ideas.

For example there is little in this issue about benefits, one of the main issues of the moment, because we have nothing new to say - but we should.

So in future, ContraFlow will come out with a background article on some current issue, that has been through a process of argument and debate. We will also have an 'activists diary' column bringing together all those fun events we've been on, a section deconstructing the straight press, and some of the usual stuff.

If you want to get involved in these discussions about articles, disagree with the proposed change, want to write/draw something for future issues, want to meet us cos we're so fab ...

Come to a readers and friends meeting on Sunday 22/2/98 3pm at 121 Raiton Rd. Brixton.

Postmodern Student Struggle in Germany

The ongoing neo-liberal re-structuring of the university and the education system in general has led to a new wave of strikes and actions by students and pupils all over Germany.

Starting in Hessen the strike wave reached its (first?) peak in mid December, when over 100 universities were hit by strikes. On Nov. 27th 40.000 students demonstrated in the still-capital Bonn, on Dec. 4th 160.000 students, pupils and apprentices took part in the national day of action. Daily there are actions in many towns all over Germany. Actions include demonstrations (of course), street blockades, public lectures and other publicity stunts. At the second national demonstration, on Dec. 17th, the police felt obliged to attack some 1.000 militant students when they tried to breach the cordon around the government buildings in Bonn.

This is the good news. The bad news is: By the time of writing - some days before X-mas - it is unlikely that the struggles will continue after the break in January, because many students fear losing a semester on their career path.

What's happening?

After the revolt of 1968, the German education system developed to create a mass of well educated labour for the high-tech sector leading the export economy, and for the rationalisation of production in response to global competition. The universities were opened up to working class and middle class youth, and the results of the 68 revolt were institutionalised with a greater democratisation and relative freedom in studying humanities. The result was the (in)famous mass university of the 80s, which was also tolerated by the state, because it was a place where young people could be placed instead of being on the dole.

Since the end of the 80s, and increasingly since 1990, the German state has tried to restructure the education system, to cut the public costs of education, and to adjust the system to the changing needs of capital and of the nation state within globalized, international competition.

German society is being restructured according to the presumed needs of international capital [so called 'Standard Deutschland'].

to be competitive as a location for investments etc. while at the same time, and possibly contradictorily, decision making is becoming more dominated by elites [e.g. over questions about biotechnology and nuclear power].

Both elements can be found in the neo-liberal restructuring of the universities:

1. The new discourse and political programme concerning education policy aims at the intensification and de-skilling of work for the broad masses of students (for immediate exploitation in capitalist production) and the establishment of elite education, which should include more general knowledge necessary for people in positions with a wider outlook (i.e. pure bourgeois ideology). Funding for universities is now being linked to reinforce this. Struggle in this area tends towards 'defence of the right' to study, less so a critique of intensification and still less the already existing private sector dominance of the universities.

2. There are strong attempts, by the Christian Democrats' students, to cut down so called self-governing institutions of the students.

3. State funding of students from poorer families has been under attack for several years. The percentage of students who receive public funds is continuously declining, which means exclusion of a growing part of the population from the possibility of upward mobility.

In general there is a tendency to re-distribute the costs of education to the individual (the state funding is paid as a loan, or parents have to pay top up money to schools), and through privatisation, to business. One effect of the loans system is to intensify the work required of students.

And in this the struggle of the students is situated.

The primary interest of most of the students in the strike was/is the fight against cuts, which are threatening their interest in accumulating the knowledge and the abilities necessary for exploitation on a high level. They accept their status as human capital, as bearers of the commodity labour power. They are not aware of their future position as part of the variable capital, which connects them to the interests of the working class in general, or of the contradiction they find themselves in.

One expression of this is the inability of the students to criticise the university as a capitalist institution, which would include a critique of the production of knowledge, and the critique of the individualised and competitive existence of the student. They (still) accept their existence as bourgeois individuals - and as future variable capital - despite their suffering (which shows in a significant number of suicides and the necessity of a special psychological services at the university).

That means: The struggle is aimed against increased competition, not competition in general.

But - in this they just don't differ from the great majority of the population. So it would be hypocritical to blame the students as a specific section of society - something which many anarchists and workers (for different reasons) tend to do - often for the unnamed reason of rejected love or reminiscence of the 'heroic' struggles of 68.

Another major difference from many other struggles is that the protest (i.e. struggle that doesn't leave the level of protest) is appreciated or acknowledged as reasonable by many of those who are the first enemies of the struggle, in the forefront the minister for science and education, but also many university directors. This shows that the powers that be perfectly recognise the interests of the students named in the struggle, and are trying to functionalize them for their own ends. At least the directors of the universities have an obvious interest - using the students protests as a means for greater state funding - which may also be an interest of the minister, who competes with other ministers for a shrinking cake.

But it is also possibly that the aim is to turn the wrath of the students away from the cuts as the reason for increased competition towards other students as competitors, so that the struggle could be functionalized as a means of the reduction of the number of students.

There is of course a difference between Germany and Britain - in so far as the Tory government was the vanguard of neo-liberalism in Europe - a restructuring of society which gained pace in Germany only since the so called reunification. But it seems to me that with Blairism the British state is changing its strategy within the global economy, from competing with low wage economies in western Europe (and now also eastern) and Asia and being a location for financial capital to returning to the first league of capitalist states (which is at least the stated aim of Tony Blair).

The German state is trying to keep its position as third imperialist power in the world and strongest state and economy in Europe. This includes what has happened in Britain 15 years ago: the re-import of the Third World into the centres of world capitalism. In Germany this means the above mentioned abolishing of democratic elements and the return of autocratic structures - a shift in the making of society from a market-mediated society of individualised consumers (with the fordist methods of feeding capital and the state by the integration of the fringes of society) to a society, in which the forces of the law of value dominate more directly and the results - the harsher exclusion of greater parts of society - are kept in check by the armed forces of the state.

The struggle of the German students is in itself a good thing, if only because struggle is the only possibility, for a significant part of the students developing a critique of their present and future existence.

What speaks against this, has already been named. We can add the dominance of the organisations within the struggle (it is co-ordinated now by the fzs - the organisation which followed the radical students' movements in the beginning of the 70s, but mainly lives its meaningless life in some meaningless institutional structures) - but have to admit that the students themselves were unable to build up a nationwide organisation - an additional sign that they are unable to break with bourgeois subjectivity which hinders collective struggles.

Also there is a tradition of forms of action, which claim to be creative, but are mainly directed at gaining media attention and 'positive attention' by the public. Compared with the last big student struggle in 1968 the extent of autonomous organisation of the distribution of knowledge has decreased, something which stands in direct relation with the extend of questioning the institution in itself.

Another hope is that the struggle against the cuts of the social wage, which was achieved by past generations of working class struggles, will spread to other sections of society, which are equally affected by the neo-liberal restructuring of society.

But the struggle is not over yet. There is still the possibility that it continues after New Years Eve. And should it continue, then there may be arising situations of confrontation which could result in a development of an antagonistic subjectivity.

Ho- Ho- Hochschulstreik!



Another comrade writes: Compared to the student struggles at the end the 60s, most of the striking students have no idea of the content and roots of the former struggles: feeling proud of fighting as individuals, many of them support the general direction of the neo-liberal project in Germany [consciously or not] even in this struggle.

Back home in Britain - students have been on the march to protest against the imposition of tuition fees and the axing of grants - attempts to agitate for French-style occupations by Situationist-inspired students unfortunately came to nothing. One occupation which did happen was at the School of Oriental and African Studies but it was limited to the issue of library access - concessions were won from management.

Various Views of the 1997 German Student Movement:
top -
* calling for Marx's knowledge and Diana's [yes - Diana's!] heart
middle -
* advertising fags, or joy through striking? [Lucky Strike is a popular euro fag brand - Streik is german for strike]
bottom -
* "only the struggle will set us free"
"equal rights for students from other countries"